YOUNG FRANCE
AND NEW AMERICA

PIERRE DE LANUX

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**YOUNG FRANCE
AND NEW AMERICA**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LA YUGOSLAVIE (The Southern Slavs)

— *Payot, Paris*

GRAMMAIRE ÉLÉMENTAIRE DE LA LANGUE SERBE

— *Delagrave, Paris*

(in collaboration with A. Ouyevitch)

IMAGINAIRES, poems

— *Edition romane, Paris*

TRANSLATIONS

PSYCHOLOGIE ET SOCIOLOGIE, by Professor J. M. Baldwin

ELEMENTS DE PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGIE, by Professor Ellwood

} *Giard et Brière, Paris*

L'UNITE YUGOSLAVE, *manifeste de la jeunesse serbe, croate et slovène réunie* — *Plon, Paris*

JUDITH, tragédie, by F. Hebbel

— *Nouvelle Revue Française, Paris*

(in collaboration with G. Gallimard)

YOUNG FRANCE AND NEW AMERICA

BY
PIERRE DE LANUX

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TO
PROFESSOR WILLIAM GARDNER HALE
AND TO
MARICE RUTLEDGE HALE
FOR MANY REASONS, THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED

FOREWORD

THESE are the reflections of a Frenchman who spent the year 1917 in America. They deal with the present events and those from the near past, but their expression is first inspired by the thought of the near future, that is to say, the period that will begin when this war ends. My purpose was to define and to sum up the possibilities which Franco-American relations will offer tomorrow, as well on intellectual as on concrete grounds.

This subject would be much too wide for one man and for one book, but we shall concentrate on the results of co-operation between elements of the younger generation of both countries. The present book is written for the young men and women of America who are interested in the present life of France.

Those who know well my country, having seen her and helped her during the present trial, will find here some facts which are already familiar to them, and I fear that they will resent my pretension

to teach them what they know better than I do myself. Other readers will charge me with excessive optimism or with "youthful" severity for the generation that preceded mine. It may be that they are right; it may be also that they lack the faith and vision that is in many of us.

I wish that, in order to face a state of things which is quite new, one could bring a quite new attitude of judgment. This is precisely what may be expected from Americans, as it is one of their best national qualities. We live in a time when the fruits of thought are ripening with strange and terrible rapidity, and many utopias of yesterday have already passed to the rank of the commonplace. Let us, therefore, deal with today's utopia with the respect that is owed to the commonplace of tomorrow. . . .

Much has been said and written about Franco-American relationships. Since one hundred and thirty-nine years, many great and less great minds have expressed concordant views on that subject. Common interpretation of republican principles, love for country and for freedom, joined to that idealist and generalizing tendency that made our two nations express their Declarations in terms that are valuable, not for one country alone, but for the whole world, from the very beginning of our con-

temporary history—how often did historians and orators dwell on that theme, developing it with more eloquence than I could bring here!

But a storm has shaken all the values of the earth. Those which will be found intact, after the crisis is over, one might well call them eternal. The friendship of the two Republics is one of them. And the values which will be born from the present overthrowing, we have to make clear as soon as possible, and confront them with our past, so as to know what remains. Among these new values, and in the first rank, there is *the realization of common standards in life*, the sense of common task and common responsibilities, and, above all, *the value of mutual knowledge* between the youth of France and America. For, after all our old reasons for mutual understanding, there exist now new reasons, and indeed, much more powerful ones, which I shall try to set forth here.

Let me first extend my thanks to all those who helped me in my task by their generous encouragements, and especially mention the reviews which published some parts of the present work: *The New Republic*, *The New France*, *The Dial*, *The Nation*, etc. And let me express my gratefulness to the authors of remarkable translations from French writers whom I quoted in this book: to Miss

Virginia Hale, to Miss Elizabeth Eyre, to Mr. Joyce Kilmer, to Mr. Deems Taylor, and to Dr. Ernest Hart, the last named having translated the poems which occur in the body of the section on Verhaeren.

P. L.

New York, October, 1917.

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**YOUNG FRANCE
AND NEW AMERICA**

YOUNG FRANCE AND NEW AMERICA

I

FORMATION OF THE PRESENT FRENCH GENERATION

Rapid history of ten years. Awakening to international problems. Hard training to civic and national life. Revival in physical life. Foreign influences. Also revival of tradition. The spirit of 1914. Who gave the best expression of it. The war. The younger elements and what they bring.

*"L'angoisse est nécessaire aux races qui sont fortes
Et pour grandir encore, il leur faut le danger."*

—EMILE VERHAEREN.

THIS study, or rather this rapid retrospective glance, will not be given from the standpoint of the historian. It will be just material for History to come, and personal testimony rather than impartial definitions. Many records like this will have to be added in order to form even a sketch of the recent past that will not be too incomplete. I shall simply tell my national experience to my comrades from the other side.

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It was a wonderful advantage to me to live in contact with the best among the younger men and women. They were writers, teachers, engineers or artists, belonging to many classes and opinions; they were also the labourers and the country people with whom I lived when serving as a soldier. To all of them I am indebted for what I am going to tell about this present generation. So, if there is beauty in the spectacle which they give, and which I shall here describe, they deserve all admiration for it.

Our parents gave us, as usually happens, some splendid examples to follow, and, also, some venerable standards to discard. As usually happens, we discovered the latter before we acknowledged the good to be kept. Or rather, the good was laid in us without our being aware of it, and is probably greater than our pride yet knows.

They were the children of 1870. They had been brought up in France's darkest days, when defeat, mutilation and isolation followed the factitious prosperity of our Second Empire. At that time France was absolutely alone; so they took the habit, for twenty years, of reasoning strictly on our forces, our fate, practically ignoring the rest of the world.

Our generation, from our younger years on, was

used to go back for its models to other times than the period which extends from 1870 to 1890. We differed in our models, but we agreed to dislike that period. It meant to us bad taste, prejudices, moral fears, limited ideas, ugly fashions, Victorianism without even prestige, people being hypnotized by their recent defeat and spending their forces in internal disputes which did not offer the slightest interest to us. We were surprised by the obstinate, obtrusive, negative hostilities of some nationalists against the foreigners, of free thinkers against the priests, of all creeds against each other.

We resented severely that they had not understood their great XIXth century (of course it was easier to us), and that they could not digest it. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were written everywhere, even on prison doors, but we were irritated not to find them in the acts of living persons. Big things were done by men of exception, against the others and without their help. I believe that this was a period of transition and hesitation—not of affirmation. A period when old and new standards were fighting each other unfruitfully, because men did not perceive the beauty and full meaning of that conflict itself, and were not used to their own mental emancipation. They spent their force for small results when immense things were at stake,

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and they followed small men in a time when great geniuses were living. What they took seriously seemed to us to be obsolete; what we worshipped made them smile. We envied a little their virtues, and not at all their vices. And we were totally disgusted by the lack of moral independence of their lives. They said "realism" when they meant "ugliness," and that single feature would be enough to separate them from us. They lied to themselves in their tastes, in their passions, in their words. They were deeply sunk in lie.

I seem to speak resentfully, but I cannot forget the old generals who dressed our young men in red trousers to send them to a modern war. The ruling class of 1870-1900 was more or less like these brave chiefs. We felt that such a world was waiting for new men. Now, we know that we were right. But, at the same time, we can explain why our elders were such; and we realize, too, that the new men are not us, but the younger ones—who know much that we ignore.

This is how things appeared when we were about 18. All national danger seemed remote and abstract. There had been a bitter injustice committed against us in 1870, when Germany had torn Alsace-Lorraine away from us, and we kept the hope that this would be readjusted some time. But few

expected that readjustment from a war, since war had proved to mean injustice. So we believed that other people expected nothing from war. And we came to lose the belief in the possibility of war itself. After the generation which had suffered from the ordeal of '71, people had grown to be comparatively indifferent to the various foreign problems and conflicts which did not concern France immediately, because they believed that France could not be involved against her will in an armed conflict. And around us were flourishing in full prosperity the ideas of the future, great social schemes, new artistic impulses, preceding the time when the universe would be ready to receive them, preceding the actual conditions, and Utopian only because of that. We were enthusiastic about them, still something was warning us that instead of solving the old problems of race, nationality, domination, they simply neglected them, or rather solved them abstractly, for the satisfaction of a few intelligences. In fact, the problems remained open. Endeavours to prevent future wars met with scepticism, or sank into Utopian schemes. We had a feeling that a greater light, all possible light, indeed, ought to have been brought on the direct cause and risks of European conflicts, which were obscure to many.¹

¹ "Thus the men in Europe who can really claim to have

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France was preparing to show the way, once more, and we were passionately learning our business of world-pioneers. We were in great, passionate, earnest hesitations. We admired, in that time, Anatole France and we admired Barrès. I name these two personifications of reformist and nationalistic spirit, although, of course, for other young men the same tendencies took other names. Barrès told us of the Earth and of the Dead, with arguments which appealed to our deepest, truest conservative instincts. And Anatole France, smiling, said: "What hath been written by the dead shall be cancelled by the living; otherwise the will of those who are no more would impose itself upon those who are still, and the dead would be the living, and the living would be the dead."—And we knew that both were true.

This antagonism could be felt in the long quarrel about the programs of teaching. The question of

worked for peace are not those who wanted to disarm their own country, to keep it neutral under all circumstances. . . . The true peacemakers were those who grasped the real struggle between the Entente and the Alliance, and proposed concrete improvements in the diplomacy about Africa, Asia Minor, and the Far East. The men who had better solutions of the Moroccan, Congo, and Balkan problems were the ones who can claim now to have done their share of thinking for civilization. . . . Those who saw the source of the friction and tried to remedy it were the real internationalists." (Walter Lippmann—*The Stakes of Diplomacy*.)

the programs in the Universities, which was more of a political dispute for the men who fixed them, was, for us, a question of choosing the knowledge that would help us to the kind of life we wanted to live. And what was that life?

This was being decided, little by little, as the result of many influences. (Certainly more varied influences than any other generation had received before.) They came through new channels. We practised more physical life than our fathers, and that influenced our ways of living. (I shall dwell again on this aspect of our formation.) We travelled more. If I take my six best friends as examples, I find that one has been in Germany and Tunisia, another in Russia and in Greece; the third through Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil; the fourth in California and Russia; the fifth in England, Italy, Russia and North America; the sixth in Algeria, Spain and Asia Minor; and I had, myself, at 27, visited thirteen nations in Europe. Three other friends of mine, being about 25, have founded a vast and prosperous French enterprise in British Columbia, after having been first around the world.

This was together the consequence and cause of our learning foreign languages much more than it had been done before. The time we spent in that

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work, however imperfect the knowledge that we might reach, is a time we never regret. It opened not only more possibilities for travelling, for easier business, direct meeting of the people, but it gave us the key to whole literatures, which, in their turn, played a decisive part in our intellectual formation. At least foreign language brought understanding of the foreign spirit, a sense of what is relative and what absolute in expression, and new reasons to love our own language.

Some foreign works impressed us greatly. Dostoevsky after Tolstoi, Kipling after Dickens, Whitman after E. A. Poe, meant a great deal, not only to writers, but to readers of any class or purpose. (How many young men did I find in the French Ambulance Service, during this war, in Belgium or in Macedonia, who were reading Walt Whitman's "Wound Dresser," from the "Drum Taps"!)

All this was preparing the notion of universal concern, which is so strong now in all of us. We got trained to think beyond the frontiers. What I called the disciples of Anatole France, looked there mostly for foreign culture. The disciples of Barrès looked there for danger. Elder people, apart from few exceptions, spoke of danger and of culture, but did not look there at all. They were negative; they were just critical; they always knew

the reasons against doing things; they were immensely far from America, whom they ignored and feared. They might have prevented this war, which from any standpoint is a failure, for all policies which led to it. They called it, *afterwards*, inevitable. But it was not. And as our generation is dying in it, it has a certain right to state how things did happen.

.

It was in 1905 that our hard training to civic and national life began, with our awakening to danger, and to the great fact that, now, everybody is concerned with everything that happens in the world. I insist upon this, because this explains all: our attitude before the war, our stand in the war, and our will after the war.

In 1904-5, came the Russo-Japanese conflict. Most of us did not feel that we were very strongly affected by it. Still we were. As soon as our Russian ally had proved to be weaker, Germany started her aggressive policy in the Moroccan question. That year Charles Péguy published his "cahier," *Notre Patrie*, about that precise week, that very day when we realized the presence of danger: "As every one, I had come back to Paris at 9 in the morning; as every one, that is to say, as about eight or nine hundred persons, I knew at half past eleven

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that a new period had just begun in the history of my own life, in the history of this country, and certainly in the history of the world." . . . "Every one, at the same time, knew that the menace of a German invasion was present, that it was there, that it was really imminent."

"It was not a news like ordinary news—it went from one man to another like a knowledge from anterior life, a recognition of anterior certitude. Indeed, each of us did find in himself the recognition total, immediate, ready, immobile—of this menace which was present. . . . Each man recognized in himself, as if it were familiar and well-known, this deep voice, this voice from inside, this voice of long-buried memory."

Later, Germany provoked brutal incidents in Alsace, which gave opportunity to notice that the Reichstag, representing the German people, had no authority whatever to disapprove a government which had the support of the Emperor. In 1908 came the annexation of Bosnia by Austria, against the will of the Serbian population, and this was the direct source of the Balkan trouble and of the European war. Now is it not the very image of our subject and a symbol of our times: that in order to write, in America, about France, I am obliged to mention the annexation of Bosnia and to insist upon

it? I was a soldier at that time, and I had been in Bosnia before. I remember my comrades asking me to explain what was the connection between that Turkish province and their possible going to battle against the Prussians? Many of them did not believe that such a connection existed.

In 1911 Germany sent a warship to the Moroccan coast. I remember the feeling we had, of air being made irrespirable by that nation. We had to come, little by little, in spite of ourselves, to adopt the feelings and opinions of our fathers towards the Prussians. We discovered our fathers to be right, by ourselves. *We did not inherit the idea of revenge*, as the Germans always pretended. We thought it, for a time, to be the remotest possible illusion. (In 1899, at the time of the Boer war and after the Fashoda incidents, England was a hundred times more unpopular than Germany in France, among the young.) Germany having chosen the "big stick" policy, we rediscovered, one by one, the elements of old hostilities. The man from the people who had been anti-militaristic for a time and who loved his work and peace, got more and more impatient, and realized that in Europe a group of powers was acting systematically against us when nothing was to fear from us. For the people of France were still ready to do many new foolish things, but could

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never, never have been driven into an aggressive war. We felt this drawback to the maintenance of peace. But we were decided, and our friends and allies with us, to maintain peace in spite of the drawback.

In 1912 the Balkan war broke out. Four small nations, in order to make their brothers free from Turkish yoke, mobilized. The European governments refused to believe in a possible war, and when it broke out they believed in the victory of the Turks. When the Turks were defeated these governments did not know how to prevent discord from arising among the victors, and when this brought a second war, in 1913, they could see that Austria and Germany were responsible for it, and a splendid national insurrection ended pitifully in a slaughter of allies because the Central Powers wanted the weakening of Serbia and the rupture of the Balkan league.

Even during these Balkan wars, many said in France, "Let those people fight if they want to. We have nothing to do with Balkanic aspirations." Still, Serbian aspirations to independence meant the end of the German ambition in "Mittel-Europa." Some of us had a notion of that. So, at the news of mobilization, in October, 1912, I had gone to

Serbia, and managed to see this crisis through. I saw after a few weeks, as plainly as any man could have done in my place, that the true enemy of Balkanic freedom and peace was not only Turkey, but Austria, and that the victories over the Turks were already victories over the Germans; and that the seed of terrible European troubles was in the oppression of the Southern Slavs by the Austrians. One had but to be there and talk with the people, to bring back invaluable observations. When I did so, competent people did not refuse to believe me, but they considered that the matter was not important enough to pay much attention to it.

My deep conviction is that the peril could have been checked in its beginning, in 1913, if we all had had sufficient information and a strong feeling that we were all threatened by it. That is why I believe that the ignorance and indifference of the world is the greatest, worst enemy of mankind and of peace. And, above all, this war has to wipe out international "know-nothingism."

On the 28th of June, 1914, the Austrian Crown prince was killed by a Bosnian fanatic.

On the 3rd of August, 1914, as a consequence, Germany declared war upon France.

But those ten years had prepared us for "l'Union

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Sacrée." It was a part of our equipment for mobilization. And the Kaiser did not know it. . . .

I come now to a most difficult part of my task, which is to give the true portrait of the young man of France at the eve of the war—his actions in the war have been but a consequence of those morals of his, that were moulded before. We have seen what had influenced him. What was the result of it all? Which ethics were ours in 1914?

I have a very high idea of them—of course, since they were mine, but I begin to believe that there is something even finer, and it is the ethics of the young men who are now twenty and who had their moral formation during the war.

We had, as has been said, to combine and reconcile the conservative impulses, the impulses for reformation, in a peculiar national situation, and to add to this the result of our own moral experiences, which were rather rich and bold. (Sometimes innovation had led to an unexpected form of tradition. Sport was a true returning to old French sixteenth century habits.)

We gave to personal freedom and responsibility, not to mention sincerity to oneself, an importance which brought us nearer to American standards than you believe. We felt immense, unlimited admira-

tion and reverence for our masters, who were those *exceptions* among our elders. They were the intelligent and the strong, and the loving, wherever we could find them.

I do not speak now of literary mastership; but of a vital one. The thinkers whom we followed had come to an ethical, often to a political and religious attitude, which was made of affirmation. Even those who were free from political entanglements, were deeply and constantly affected by the national life. (How far from the misanthropic, nonchalant artists of 1890!) None were indifferent to collective problems. The most skeptical, apparently, were not the least passionate. All had an interpretation of moral life, to propose. And among them we chose, and about them we earnestly discussed within ourselves and with each other.

One man we were reading with more and more attention, among those elders of exception. Charles Péguy had been for 16 years the editor of *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, a periodical which published literary, political, documentary works, as separate books. (There appeared for the first time the works of Romain Rolland, including the famous *Beethoven*, and the long serial of *Jean Christophe*.)

Péguy belonged to old French soil. His parents were peasants. He had the strong culture from the

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Ecole Normale, but his faithfulness to the earth of his ancestors was like France's herself. He had clear, penetrating views, was hard to his opponents, and hard to his friends. He described once, with implacable accurateness, the contradictory aspects of Jaurès, the great socialist leader, his power and also his weakness. He was absolutely honest, to his party, to his readers, to himself. When we read his books we learnt what civic morals meant. They are usually the most corrupt (because treason and capitulation are there of little consequence) and they ought to be the purest (because they are simple, without obscure nuances, and honesty almost suffices.) But Péguy brought something more than honesty. He revealed to us a mystical side of politics.

"We turn then to the young people . . . we can only say to them: Take care. You look upon us as back numbers. This is good,—but be careful. When you speak lightly, when you treat the Republic lightly, so lightly, you run the risk not only of being unjust (which is, perhaps, nothing in your system, at least, so you say, but which in our system is serious, and, according to our ideas, a good deal). You risk more, in your system even, in your ideas; you risk being stupid. . . . You forget, you ignore that there has been a republican mysticism (that

which we call republican *mystics*) ; and to forget it, and to ignore it, does not necessarily mean that it has not existed. Men have died for liberty as men have died for faith. These elections of today appear to you a grotesque formality, universally hypocritical, corrupt through and through ; and you have the right to say so. But men have lived, men without number, heroes, martyrs, and I will say saints, and when I say "saints," I know, perhaps, what I am talking about . . . an entire people have lived so that the lowest idiot of today should have the right to accomplish this corrupt formality. This was a terrible, a laborious and formidable childbirth. Nor had this always reached the limit of grotesqueness. The peoples around us, nations, entire races, are in travail with the same painful childbearing ; are working and struggling to obtain this ludicrous formality . . .

"These elections are ludicrous. But the heroism and the sanctity with which, by means of which, are obtained these ludicrous results, *temporarily* ludicrous, contain all that is most fine and most sacred in the world.

"Everything begins in mystics and ends in politics. . . . The essential is that in each order of things, in each system, the *mystic* should not be devoured by the *politic* to which it has given birth."

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I thought of Péguy when I read this simple answer in Witter Bynner's *New World*: "Beauty in politics?—If you put it there." . . . Péguy reacted against our tendency to desert politics. He accepted all the duties of the citizen.

Charles Péguy, who went as a lieutenant of reserve with his section of infantry, was killed at the battle of the Marne, in September, 1914.

The following lines are to be found in his last *Cahier*, which was entitled "Sur la Philosophie de M. Bergson," and was among the best works he ever gave. One may realize the loss we endured by his death.

"A great philosophy is not an irreproachable philosophy. It is a fearless philosophy.

"A great philosophy is not a dictation. The greatest is not that which is faultless.

"A great philosophy is not the one against which there is nothing to say. It is the one which has said something.

"And, moreover, it is the one which had something to say, in spite of being unable to say it.

"It is not the one which has no errors. It is not the one which has no gaps. It is the one which has abundancies.

"It is not a question of confusing. It is in the

schools that it is a question of confusing. It is not even a question of convincing.

"To confuse the adversary in a matter of philosophy . . . what bad breeding!

"The true philosopher knows that he is not standing opposing his adversary, but beside his adversary and others, facing a reality always greater and more mysterious.

"And this even the true physician knows. That he is not standing opposing his rival physician, but beside him, facing a nature always more profound and more mysterious.

"To listen to a philosophical debate, or to participate therein, with the idea that one is going to convince or subjugate his adversary, or that one is going to see one of the two adversaries confound the other, is to show that one does not know what one is talking about, to acknowledge to great incapacity, vulgarity and barbarism. It is evidence of a great lack of culture. It is to show that one does not belong to this country."

His conclusion to the discussions about Bergsonism was this:

"It is a prejudice, but it is an absolutely un-eradicable prejudice that demands that an inflexible reason should be more a reason than a flexible one.

. . . It is the same prejudice that demands that an inflexible scientific method should be more a method, and more scientific, than a flexible scientific method.

"It is evident, on the contrary, that it is the elastic and flexible methods, flexible logic, and flexible morals that are the most severe, as they adhere the most closely to their object.

"An inflexible logic may permit errors to escape from its recesses. . . . An inflexible moral may permit crimes to escape from its recesses, while, on the contrary, a flexible moral will hold, denounce and pursue the sinuosities of those things which seek to escape. Inflexibility is essentially false; flexibility is true.

"It is flexible morals which exact a heart to keep perpetually ready and pure, and which exercise the most implacable and hard restraints. The only ones which are never absent, which do not pardon. It is elastic and flexible morals, flexible methods, flexible logic, that exercise the most implacable obligations. It is for this reason that the most honest man is not he who enters into apparent rules. It is he who remains in his place, who works, who suffers and who says nothing."

These are the last lines of his that were published. But Péguy was still an elder to us. I shall quote

now another writer, who really embodied, for the few years of his life, our best feelings, beliefs, enthusiasms. He was the living soul of us all. Henri Franck died at 23, before the war, leaving an unfinished poem: *La Danse devant l'Arche*, and various essays on philosophy and literature.

Here are the verses where he speaks of his friends and of our group: ¹

“French boys, fine of face, raised by your mothers,
 Who from babyhood had slow and serious growth
 In your large houses enclosed in leafy gardens.
 Boys religious as I was, from childhood taught
 To assist the priest and help in conducting the mass;
 Older, you left intelligent mother and wise father
 And came to complete in Paris the growth of your spirit.
 You have sense and pleasing manners, politeness and
 warmth;
 Latin and geometry you knew, and combining
 Things respected from childhood and those learned in
 college,
 Religious boys, much troubled by your studies,
 At twenty years strangely you try to reconcile
 Old beliefs with your new uncertainty.”

And this expresses the understanding among the young men who find themselves before the new task of their lives:

“O the joy of feeling ourselves in heart among our contemporaries,
 And of building up our spirits through each other!

¹ Translation by Miss V. Hale.

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"Because in the same year we were all conceived
There vibrates a secret understanding among us,
A thing that is strong to bind our youthful brows
As the yoke binds the oxen together to their teams.
Like them we press on with united effort,
Like them bear on the earth an equal weight.

.
"The air in which our laugh rings and our voices sound
Is of the same age. It was born with us;
Because we had our growth at the same time, together,
Each of us understands, and each expresses, all the
others;
Each of us easily may know from the beginning
What this clear-headed old man may not know.

.
"We have been watching the new life grow within us,
And now it is ripe, eager to spend itself.
It is we, now, who shall take the risk,
We, who shall hurl the discus,
And our violin shall lead the dance,
We are seeking a place where to build our work.

"The generation which we form together
Is winged and massive as a swarm of bees—
What branch will hold its humming fruit,
And what will be the flavour of our honey?"

Henri Franck had a clear and intense belief in
the genius of France. He said of the French lan-
guage:

"It is like the mobile and expressive face,
The obedient army under its intelligent chief,
And the royal road where the spirit entire

May march forward at ease.

Like the fiery sword the arch-angel wielded,
The sword of reason, it reveals and separates,
Defines and creates limits, points out and circumscribes.

"It has the ring of laughter, it is the voice of justice,
The sound of clearness and of certitude,
The pure expression of the inner self.
Over the orator it throws a decent dress,
And gives the hero's voice resounding speech."

And glorifying the country herself and then the
Republic:

"I greet you, sentinel on the bridge of Europe,
Live bird in your vines, lark in your field.
Cock singing at dawn of the centuries on your farm;
And as a peasant entering the hall
Out of respect for the masters of the house
And that he may not soil the finely waxed floor
Carefully removes his boots and holds them in his hand,
So in your honour, O France, I put aside
The heavy perturbation of my spirit;
The gaze with which I look upon you shall be clear,
My eyes shall look with love, O cherished country!

"O ancient wisdom built up century after century;
O courage of the world, heart of the West,
Nation inventive, intelligent, O Living One —
Republic, I hail you by your glorious name.

"As a young woman leaning on the balcony of the family
mansion
The house adorned with antique portraits and coats of
arms, and statues along the walks,

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Will not look at the walls of the house
Nor its arms woven in beautiful tapestries,
Nor the ancient escutcheons painted upon its wood,
But with a long look courageous and eager
Follows the great ships cleaving the water toward new
lands

And the young emigrant with exalted look on his face:
O Youth, with elbow braced upon the history of ages
You turn your eyes toward the free horizon.

"And you are the first to build and the first to destroy;
That in your generous heart you may feel life always
warm,

Each century you turn your age-cold knowledge to new
purpose,
You put to untried uses your ancient wealth."

If I quote such long passages it is because I never could find a better and more accurate expression of our spirit than this lyrical one. In a great epoch, the poets are the best speakers of a nation.

Henri Franck was passionately devoted to philosophical study and teaching. But his essential disposition to abstract thought did not prevent him from hearing

"Along the open frontier—the stirring
Of ponderous legions of Teutons hungry for prey."

And in one of his philosophical chronicles in the review *La Phalange*, he wrote these prophetic sentences, as he returned from a trip to Alsace, where he met the men, the Alsatians:

"Ah, when, after a week, I went up again from Barr and Obernai to Sainte-Odile, under my steps questions arose with the leaves; as I walked with care not to hurt the earth, I felt that I was treading on a great and sorrowful problem. We must go, all of us, every year, several times a year, armed with letters of introduction, to visit Alsace and talk with the Alsatians. You will not teach them much, but you will learn a great deal from them—Barrès is right.

"They will give you a conclusive lesson in energy and manly pride. Though Charles Andler, in a magnificent lecture, did indeed warn us that there is no German culture, I had not grasped the whole meaning of the statement. Now, thanks to the Alsatians, I am in a position to confirm it and to explain it to you. . . .

"The question is a pressing one. Germany becomes each day more odious. Europe no longer breathes freely. It was Germany that contrived the vile plot which made Young Turkey its victim. It is sad to think that today Lord Byron would go to the rescue of the Turks, but where is Lord Byron? And we—what are we doing? We must really appreciate that the time for delicate intellectual hesitations has passed. In every corner of the world the future meets one obstacle: Germany. . . . The

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magnificent struggle between the middle class which has not yet lost its moral strength, and those of the workers who are seeking to find and to prepare themselves, is dominated and warped by German effort. Is this heavy backward force much longer to bar our way? Will it be successful in throwing itself across the path of the creative evolution of French freedom?"

That was written in 1910.

It may easily be seen that the want of young men was for an employment of their mystical faculties, an answer to their mystical exigencies. It has been called a "renaissance of idealism," which is not quite true. The sign of youth in nations as well as in individuals is the want to give themselves widely to high and limitless aims. These young men did not exactly *go back* to a former spiritual ideal. But first they worshipped what they knew to be the highest objects of love; and then they wanted to call "Divine" what they loved. Mystics do not mean orthodoxy, for there are mystics resulting from any high form of belief, and they do not exclude each other. A mistake that was made some time ago was to expect from Science, mystics to be created that would replace all others. This could no more be conceived by a generation which had assimilated pragmatism. Now Péguy proposed a form of

mystics, and Paul Claudel another, and Whitman another. We listened to them all. And it can be said indeed that there was no new work of art which was not consciously backed by mystics.

Yes, it was a rich epoch, a clean, strong, passionate one. It was free from prejudice for or against science. But everything was looked at for what it was, and only those *false witnesses* were hated who gave to France a visage which had never been hers, and were responsible for the distorted image which the world had of her. (Some of them are still alive or enthroned in the Académie.) A sense of responsibility developed which was not imposed as a heavy burden, but accepted as a joyful dignity. Every moment of personal, cultural or national life obliged a choice, and it was indifference which was losing ground. Professor James Mark Baldwin, who followed closely that "renaissance" and probably interpreted an aspect of it in his theory of "Pancalism," wrote in 1913:¹

"Indeed, the signs multiply of a new departure in France, a departure amounting to a renaissance of the spiritual life. It shows itself in a new sobriety and firmness in foreign policy, a new demand for personal temperance and restraint, a new

¹ *French and American Ideals* (Manchester).

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enthusiasm for moral achievement. In this the true *élan* of the French character is again revealed. A new stage of the French ideal is in process of formation. . . . Americans join with all the world in acclaiming this renewal of the national life of France in a moral purpose so resolute, so informed with knowledge, so sure of itself."

.

When the war broke out, the first spontaneous manifestation which resulted from it was l'Union Sacrée. It was an immediate response to a question that had to be instantly solved. All solved it in the same sense, because a clear feeling of relative importance of things was instantly imposed upon us. First of all, France had to be saved. And in this struggle, two principles were face to face. On one side, the system, more immediately prosperous, of stiff unification and mechanical co-operation was imposed—an order complete but artificial. On the other side, unification coming by itself, from within, by a natural, normal process of life as a result of the free will of men freely associated, an order which was more rich and flexible. The battle of the Marne decided between those two orders, and was for the civilized world of today what Salamis had been for the Greek world.

The French were morally prepared for the worst, and the first retreat did not surprise them. If Paris had had to be besieged or even abandoned, the army's morale would have stood the shock. But that extreme trial was spared us. And then began a great experience of mutual knowledge for the French. Social classes, political parties, were mixed in the trench, and as each one was giving an equal share of blood, none had a right to claim more patriotic authority than the others. These classes and parties learned to meet on the basis of equality before death, which is a rather solid basis on which to appreciate each other. They certainly are decided to oppose each other after the war, for every one finds in the great and complex events reasons to confirm his faith and standards. But they will fight each other more intelligently, having more respect for what they oppose. No valuable evolution of thought could be obtained by sanguinary process, except on the subject of war itself and the realization of its horrors. But in the interior of each party an evolution occurred towards more consciousness and dignity.

As for a better knowledge of foreign minds, what invaluable experience was the presence on our soil of men from most allied countries: Belgians, Serbians, Americans, Englishmen, Russians, Portu-

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guese, Italians! What an opportunity given to our young men to put into practice their abstract interest and curiosity for other countries, and to prepare countless forms of co-operation for the work after the war!

Many of them, though, will work no more. Thousands will play no more a part in the life of the country they loved—and no part in life at all. My friends Alain-Fournier, Baguenier-Désormeaux, Jean Reutlinger, Armand de Montoussé—and my countless brothers whose names I do not know—you were the best among us and now you leave a heavy task for us to perform. We shall miss you not with the heart only; we shall miss your energies and advice. At least we must try to imagine what you would require from us, and then do it.

Not death only did strike the martyred country, but also sufferings of all kinds. The endless trains of wounded, I have them well in mind. Thousands of bleeding bodies I bent over:

“The crushed head . . .

The neck of the cavalryman with the bullet through and through, I examine,

. . . The perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound,

. . . The one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening, so offensive. . . .”¹

¹ Whitman.

And above all, this has been the infinite martyrdom of women. Women of our time have been through trials which made them the true victims of this war. Think of the little probability of the infantryman coming back, after three years of renewed, perpetual risk. Women faced this with limitless heroism. They had shared the moral preparation of the young men; they, too, had known those enlightening and exalting discoveries which were ours, and often they approached more closely than we, to our own young standards of life. Indeed they contributed in fixing those standards, and we knew that we were right when they approved of what we did. In the war they played a part equal to that of the men, as nurses, workers in ammunition factories, and in learning hundreds of new occupations. And they brought up alone, true to our ideals magnified by the greatest of sacrifices, the children of the fighting, and the children of the dead.

Useless, criminal business was this war. I can't compare it better than to a huge railway catastrophe, due to mischief: an engineer had run mad and believed that all trains had to yield the track to him. Now trains are burning. The more help, the sooner it will be over. It is no more a question of idly

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discussing if railway catastrophes are good or bad. It is a business of stopping the mad engine, and two-thirds of the world are now occupied with that task.

This experience was worthless for those who had found without it, or would have found, a noble sense to life and to work. It was just enlightening to those who ignored themselves, and had their own value revealed to themselves, through it. To most it was but the opportunity to manifest what they unconsciously were. For some, for very few, it meant a magnificent display of their best qualities and gave a full employment to their means. I think, for instance, of the aviators, who are the very definite product of a generation formed through love of science, sport and self-sacrifice.

I felt, when I happened to visit them in the field, that I met the very exceptional heroes for whom this war meant (as it did for all fighters in other times) intense individual expression of power, courage and intelligence. For them at least war meant exalted form of life.

But our largest hope is in another element, more and more numerous, and which does much, thinks more, and speaks little in this moment. Have you seen a drawing by Bernard Naudin, picturing "Le

Bleuet"? Le Bleuet is the young soldier from the classes of 1914, '15, '16, '17, called during the war. He is now from eighteen to twenty-two. The young man who is now about to enter the fight, after he had had three years of moral preparation through the fight carried on by his elders, is a new kind of man.

He grew up aware of the near presence of death. He faced in their sternest reality the duties and conflicts of personal life, family life, national life. He and his comrades will be fit to lead us after the war. They must be our leaders.

The salvation of France will be to let herself be led by her men of twenty, when they come back. They know evidently more than we do about the present time. They have our experience plus their own. They can see our schemes meeting realization or failure; our dreams become their schemes, and they have dreams in their turn which we cannot guess, and which will come true—as our nightmares did. For it appears that these men have deep and reasonable faith in themselves.

Last year, in Salonica, Gaston Chérau told me this anecdote: The young recruits from the class of 1915 had seen their first battle, and had behaved splendidly. After it, an old officer was congratulating them, and, briskly, although he had tears in his

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eyes, told some of them: "You are wonderful boys, all of you." A young fellow replied: "Oh, Captain, that's nothing. But wait a minute till you see those from the class of '16—then you'll see something!"

II

ABOUT AMERICA IN 1917

The capital fact of the present evolution. Its prophets. America's work during the first part of the war. Conditions of international leadership. Perils of "know-nothingism." The value of common experience. The value of common purpose. War and Democracy. The pacifists from the trenches. Our "prussianization." Common sense and our aims.

The boy enlisted. Then he told his father, who asked him what his motives were:

"Well, this treatment of the Belgians got on my nerves at last."

THESE United States. This young country—this old country in the experience of democracy. A great, successful experience, easy but for one dreadful crisis, when the land was divided and bleeding for five years. And now, meeting for the first time an actual world task.

I have tried to set aside the thousands of small episodes and observations which I have gathered during my presence in this country, and to isolate the main striking significance of the last event. I see it as follows:

The nation is of two broad categories, having

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practically nothing in common but the name of American, and ideals which have never had an opportunity to appear to be common. First, the families who lived in America in the time of the Civil War, then those who have arrived since. The first, mostly of English, Irish, Dutch and French descent. The latter German, Slav, Jewish, Italian, Syrian, etc. The first had colonized and organized the New World, and lived through the crisis which put its very existence in question. The latter came to a New World that was ready and achieved, and played an obscure part in its prosperity. Until now they have had no place in the ruling class, except the Jews who first reached the higher positions. All the life of the recent immigrants has been devoted to personal fortune and safety; they have kept a rather sentimental attachment to the motherland and the traditions of the race. Still, by their very presence on this soil, they shared the latent ideal, which was that of public liberty and personal dignity. They had emigrated to find it and to find a larger chance of prosperity under a sky that was less heavy than the sky of the old empires.

Now the New Country is agitated by the irresistible call of the world. She cannot remain isolated nor indifferent. The world makes too great a noise, and that noise comes nearer and nearer. Things

have gone far since the torpedo which struck the *Lusitania* was heard exploding, on this shore. The New Country decides her ways according to the old principles laid by the first immigrants, but applied to the circumstances of the present day. President Wilson says March 5, 1917: "We are provincials no longer. The tragical events of the thirty months of vital turmoil through which we have just passed have made us citizens of the world. There can be no turning back. Our own fortunes as a nation are involved, whether we would have it so or not.

"And yet we are not the less Americans on that account. We shall be the more American if we but remain true to the principles in which we have been bred. They are not the principles of a province or of a single continent. We have known and boasted all along that they were the principles of a liberated mankind. . . .

". . . All nations are equally interested in the peace of the world and in the political stability of free peoples, and equally responsible for their maintenance."

Those historical words meant new duties for all America—the first and the second category. How did the second behave? How far did it endorse the attitude of the adopted country?

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I shall give an instance of it which struck me very strongly:

In the heart of the great metallurgic district of Pennsylvania, thousands of Slavs live and work, men who emigrated to escape Austrian and Hungarian oppression. In June, 1917, after the visit to this country of a Serbian colonel, Milan Pribitchevich, who talked to them of the duty to help in the war of liberation, two thousand enlisted and went at once. Now they are fighting in Salonica.

I went to Johnstown to see them depart, and it was a spectacle which I shall never forget. They were not even American citizens yet. They had lived here in peace, some in prosperity. They could never have been forced to take arms against the Empire from which they came. But they chose to revolt against it because the spirit of liberty was in them. I saw them receiving two flags from the hands of their priests, an American flag and a Serbian one. They took the oath to conquer or to die, and the two flags were solemnly blessed. Then those simple men, who belong to a strong, pure, peasant race, kissed both flags as a sign of equal allegiance. This was a real scene from the drama of the great international upheaval.

It had a great significance. Those emigrated people, who are free from any oppression and can

hear every opinion, have the right to claim that they represent the free creeds of their countrymen from oppressed lands. Now they speak little, but they volunteer and go, showing that this country is not only a refuge against tyranny, but a place where the energies of liberty are sufficiently abundant to be spread throughout over the world.

No representative of America was there. (The city of Johnstown has a strong German population; the authorities, who were invited, did not appear.) The daily papers hardly mentioned this departure of two battalions, and probably did not notice the meaning of it. I am convinced that many of you Americans do not know the resource which is in those simple people, who make no advertisement of their feelings, but go and die for "your" principles. And, with differing souls, their love for the country rests on the same basis as that of the builders of America themselves.

And when they will have given their blood, the last difference between you, which rested in an unequal experience, will be swept out, because they will have shared the greatest experience of your civic life.

I think this is the capital fact of the present evolution, and all the episodes which hold the headlines

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of the daily papers are but details in it. This active "melting" process is the triumphant meaning of America, which was announced by its prophets in the past, and which also vibrates in the words of its younger poets. Whitman exclaimed:

Brain of the New World! what a task is thine!
To formulate the Modern . . .
. . . Land tolerating all—accepting all. . . .

And Witter Bynner, who wrote on the copy of his "New World," which he gave to me: . . . "the new world being both France and America," says:

Here as I come with heaven at my side
None of the weary words they say
Remain with me,
I am borne like a wave of the sea
Towards world to be . . .
And, young and bold,
I am happier than they—
The timid unbelievers who grow old!"

What happened for us in relation with the world, happens for the various elements of your country in relation with each other. The mutual acquaintance of the various races in the ranks of the national army will work for an even more rapid union.

In the future, the violation of Belgium and the victory of the Marne will be regarded as events of American as well as European history, since the first determined the conscience of the world against

Germany, and the second made it possible for America to interfere in time. Your moral preparation was, in my opinion, as rapid as it could be. But many elements among the best educated and informed had not waited for an official and general intervention. From the early days of the war American boys were to be found in the ambulance and aviation corps, American women among the nurses and engaged in Relief work. All this proceeded from two virtues which I think are characteristic of America—chivalry and right intuition. I saw those qualities applied in many war works; I saw them give unbelievable results of efficiency in some instances, like the “Appui Belge,” a French work ruled by American methods, or the Vacation War Relief Committee with whom I had the pleasure to co-operate, and who supplies our troops with surgical field material.

I remember M. Jusserand telling me of the extreme delicacy and modesty of many American donors, who never wanted their name to appear, and often gave for our wounded more than regard for their own comfort would have allowed them to do.

Indeed, America seems to be designated for a certain form of world-leadership, which does not mean a world-domination, far from it; but a stand

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that involves an example to be followed by others. Some countries wanted to rule the world when the world did not care for their rule. But the fact is that the world of today is eagerly expecting America to play a leading part in its destinies. You do not realize how much an enlightened Russian, Frenchman, Syrian, Chinese, expects from your presence in the family of nations.

But there are heavy conditions to be fulfilled by a moral leadership like the one which is wanted from both our countries. First of all, "Know-nothingism" has to be banished. America will reap the fruits of her clean, unaggressive, honest policy: her prestige everywhere is growing, which means immediate and concrete advantages. But America has to be revealed to herself with all that she contains.¹ In that respect, there is an amazing contrast between the abundance and facility of information, and the actual lack of knowledge.

¹ "America is like a vast Sargasso Sea—a prodigious welter of unconscious life, swept by ground-swells of half conscious emotions. All manner of living things are drifting in it, phosphorescent, gaily coloured, gathered into knots and clotted masses, gelatinous, unformed, flimsy, tangled, rising and falling, floating and merging, here an immense distended belly, there a tiny rudimentary brain (the gross devouring the fine)—everywhere an unchecked, uncharted, unorganized vitality like that of the first chaos." (Van Wyck Brooks in *America's Coming of Age*.)

Since these lines were written, America has entered into her new process of crystallization.

A strange phenomenon of the present time deserves more attention than it seems to have roused. It is a consequence of the opposition between interventionists and pacifists. The first, who belonged to the nationalist and more conservative part of the country, were pushing America forward and urging her to take part in the world conflict, and so hastened her evolution. The other extreme party, which included the most advanced elements, was striving in order to hold the country back, stopping her on her way to intervention, and practically acting as reactionary power. The final results will probably bring surprises to both parties.

We regard America as being nearly ready for political leadership, because the international attitude of mind of the Americans is the right one. They are not embarrassed by old prejudices and methods, and have a tendency to settle things according to elementary human right, which they never lose sight of. That is why we welcome America in the conference of peace.

But my hope and faith in America is not confined to that. I expect from her, very soon, some great artistic revelations. Her avidity to absorb will soon be followed by a faculty to choose and to reject, and then she will be ready for creation,

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which will not be an isolated exception. Already some splendid isolated works are showing the way.

I find one more likeness with the French, in the fact that many American men and women are worth more than the purpose they seem to have in life. Are not some disputable forms of success still pursued, at the cost of happiness, health and life itself, by men and women of rich resource who kill in themselves all possibility for deep, personal, original life? It is because we love America so much that such slight disappointments do not leave us indifferent.

The present crisis is bringing to the people of America a moral experience which can be compared with that which came to the people of France, in August, 1914. Of course, the experience of American citizens will never be the same as that of the Europeans. But similarly the English experience in the war is not the French one, which in turn is neither the Belgian, nor the Serbian, nor the Polish. King Albert's situation is not President Wilson's; still as a matter of fact, both took the same attitude towards the same challenge.

The United States took its actual stand by a long considered act which consciously involves large responsibilities. And the whole country, understand-

ing the gravity of possible consequences, is making rapid acquaintance with that "Union Sacrée" which in France was our first great positive experience in the present war.

There was until now, in spite of our common principles, one tremendous difference between us. The people of France had first to lose their feeling of security and be thrown on the battlefield. America had not even been made anxious for her safety. Now her every citizen is anxious, and thinks, and tries to find his way. And that anxiety is in itself an immense experience.

Now if something great is to be realized after the war, if we are to know, as Mr. Wilson and our successive Premiers have said explicitly, a peace maintained by an organized international will, then the future maintainers of that peace have first to understand each other, and this implies that the terms we use have a similar sense. What understanding was possible between a European soldier with his three years of fighting in the trenches, with his experiences of danger, of anger, and of meditation in the constant face of death—and an American citizen from the West? Today, the citizen from the West has made up his mind, has reflected on the government's reasons, and has endorsed the President's action. There was no alliance, there

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was no concerted action between us. But the facts are these: France which was peaceful had to mobilize against certain destructive forces. America which is peaceful had to mobilize against the same forces. Thus our effort and your effort toward peaceful life had something in common, were it only the common drawback to its success. And so in the struggle to establish a lasting peace, we were already co-operating indirectly. Thus some international terms had passed from Utopia to reality. This may seem to be of little importance. Still it is capital.

Because peace will come. We must remember that today throughout the world a formidable and resolute will exists, almost unanimous, to guarantee that peace, in the future, against the intrigues of adventurous politics. That will exists even more firmly in the minds of those who do not express it in speeches, but are fighting for it.

In 1792 France wanted to bring liberty to the world. The world was not ready to receive it. Only the Americans, the Swiss, and the English, as nations, knew what the word itself meant. Most of the others, as the French sometime earlier, did not see anything more glorious than to belong to a prince. The world really awoke in 1848. In the same way the world of three years ago was not ripe

for the general enforcement of peace. But now it is awake, dreadfully indeed, and waits for something that has to come. Will you say it is utopian, the international understanding which practically all inhabitants of the civilized world call for with all their hearts, and for which so many are dying?

Well, to obtain this result of understanding, we have to deal with terms of common significance. Until February 3rd the end of the war seemed to announce itself as the way into an obscure, uncertain period, full of debates and disagreements, where three groups of Powers would be involved, directly or otherwise: the Allies, the Central Powers, the neutrals. And what was there of common significance for those three groups of similar strength, and entirely dissimilar mentalities, experiences, and aspirations?

Now let us look at the consequence of the American intervention. America has broken with a nation that refused to respect treaties. It is not a special point of maritime right that matters here; it is a fundamental opposition of doctrine. America refuses to admit that a nation, more than an individual, might suppress a law, when that law interferes with its desires. An Austrian diplomat said: "A nation has a right to wage a preventive war." He meant the attack on Serbia. Chan-

cellor Bethmann-Hollweg said: "Necessity knows no law." He meant the attack on Belgium. America stands firmly against these doctrines, or rather, this destruction of all doctrines.

The French soldiers are standing against the same. For our men, with their long civic training, are not so stupid and so blind and so tame as to fight during three years of terrible and patient struggle, without knowing why they do it. It is not for a detail, but for the most decisive principles. And if Americans went to war, it was for similar principles, and not only to avenge a submarine commander's bloody fantasy.

And now do you see the consequence, young American, my comrade? For the future we shall have the experience, in common with the whole civilized world, of having resisted the German attempt, just as we should have resisted any other: the ideas which we are fighting exist elsewhere, although they have been disappearing little by little. In Germany and Austria alone have they remained permanent ideas of government.

When peace comes, we shall find ourselves to be one vast group of nations (your President said a family) instead of various groups confronting each other in mistrust and misunderstanding. There will be, as there is already potentially (and this is

not a dream), a single ensemble wherein at least one common fundamental idea will have been expressed, and even two. First—the will to preserve a lasting peace, and, therefore, to put into practice the necessary means, which had never been seriously considered, because of the lack of manifest faith and will on the part of the great number. Second—the common experience of what threatens peace; that is, the so-called right of the mightier, used as a state doctrine, such as is represented by imperial Germany.

What has been lacking until now is a definite, clear idea to put forth in common. Here we have two. These are enough to begin with.

There seems to me no doubt that Germany's eyes will be opened, and that she will follow, because there will be no choice for her. Perhaps she will even publish the biggest books about universal peace and the ways of preserving it. We shall see her coming slowly to understand the principles enunciated by both President Wilson and the Allies. Indeed, on February 3rd Mr. Wilson spoke not only as the leader of these states, but as a leader of civilization itself. We shall see Germany falling in line, however unwillingly, with the world. And that shall be our revenge for all the evil she has done us.

So the hideous war which began as a last attempt for domination, will end as the first operation of international order and police, thanks to the common understanding wrought in the minds of even the most remote. Those whom long distance separates from the actual conflict are now brought to an experience comparable with that of the mobilized peoples of western Europe, because they have acknowledged similar moral standards, and because information travels fast. And it will be the first time that practically the whole civilized world will have done something in common, with its soul and its best forces. This involves an admirable consequence: that this world will be in active process of understanding before peace comes. Thus peace will find divergent minds already prepared to work together. Christianity itself never knew such a wide and mighty gathering under a common purpose. Now the combined forces for peace can work with the prospect of being stronger than any warlike minority that may arise; even those minorities allied together could not impose their will upon us, if *us* means the rest of the world.

I believe that it will remain the great dignity of America that she took her stand in spite of her remoteness from the major conflict, in spite of her immediate comfort perhaps; a stand worthy of na-

tions who will tomorrow build the future, and who fight today in order to render the future possible.

Among the many confused, contradictory impulses and interests which cross each other or combine or come into clash in the present time, one essential idea, or at least one *word* seems to be found everywhere, in every program and as if written in golden letters on every banner. The word Democracy seems to sum up the principal purposes which men are now fighting for. "The world has to be made safe for Democracy." This formula has met an almost unanimous assent. Of course the sense given to the word differs, according to parties, to national and, above all, to personal standpoint—as it happened in the French revolution with the word "Liberty." But, notwithstanding those variations, are we entitled to call the victory of Democracy a common purpose for the people involved in the struggle on one side?

In dealing with such matters as these, I want to say that if my temerity is great, at least my ambitions are very limited. On those two subjects of war and of Democracy millions of words have been printed, miles of paper covered with tons of ink and even many valuable ideas have been ex-

pressed. My intention is not to introduce any new proposition or solution of my own to the world crisis, but to sum up the very essential elements which constitute the point of view of the average Frenchman of our times.

It is extremely difficult to find the average man in France. Because we are so different from each other, and rather satisfied to be different. So that if you succeeded in discovering the average man, he would probably protest with the utmost energy and profess to be in no way an average representative, but simply an exceptional, independent, original sort of man, and this without any special pride or conceit, just as the next fellow would claim to be. One must not forget that point, for it will help to realize what our conception of Democracy is.

But I shall try to give, at least, the view of the young men who have had the experience of the war, for they will be the most active and influential factor in the future.

They went to war—it is very simple—because their country was invaded, in spite of all efforts to prevent it. They went to defend France. But what does France mean? I am not quite sure that France means only a country among many others,—a flag, a language and a surface of land; al-

though these things seem to many, worth fighting for. Will the reader agree if I say that France means perhaps, among other things, the land of free invention, discussion and experiment for social progress?—a living laboratory, where every new principle was tried (at our own expense) before being spread over the world?

Perhaps they did not go to war because of that? But still they fought because we loved France, and they loved France because she meant that.

I have explained how France, as a nation, had no aggressive plan at all. How we did not expect readjustment of the injustice committed in '71 through a war, but through some other way.¹ That war came upon us as a consequence of the world's indifference about some essential problems. Now, what is the present feeling of the Frenchman who has "seen it through"? I dare say that there is *one* idea that dominates all others. And it dominates them from such a height that one could say

¹ "Remember that for over forty years, we kept in our hearts that open wound: Alsace-Lorraine; and we did not make war—we suffered in silence. Our brothers were victims of the most hideous system of police oppression that was ever inflicted upon a free people. We knew it, and stood it because we wanted peace. It was not enough; since the beginning of the Twentieth Century we had to suffer German provocations in Morocco and other places. We suffered them because we wanted peace." (Speech of High Commissioner André Tardien before the Alliance Française of New York, Oct. 11, 1917.)

it is not the principal idea of our men, but the only one: *This war has to be the last one.*

Everybody is awake to that. And if you ask not even the cultivated man, but any of our "bon-hommes," in any trench in any region of the front, he will tell you sternly, simply: "*We do this, and we remain here, and we shall remain to the end, so that our children won't have to do it again.*"

No, indeed, you do not know how much we do hate war. . . .

We have been living for years in all the generous opinions which many discover today. And we do not abjure our faith in a better world—since we fight for it. To all our theoretical and reasonable hatred against war, we now add the hatred which comes through the experience of it. Why should a catastrophe, for which we are not responsible—which came by the crimes of this German ruling military class which thinks little—change ideas that we know to be true, after we had given them so much thought? Only there was too generous illusion in believing that other people had then reached our level.

For us Napoleon's failure was a sufficient demonstration. All our liberal thought, through the 19th century, is founded upon the conviction of that failure. You can find it in the writings of

all those who embody the popular French spirit,— of course mixed with a great sentimental recollection of our glories and splendors. But the Germans derived from Napoleon's adventure only limitless admiration for might and conquest. They kept anachronistic ideals which were in vogue at the time of Louis XIV. Historically they belonged to 250 years back.

Our men know that victory will come if they wait long enough, and kill and are killed until the enemy understands. Germany started with victories; but she has to meet her failure. Militarism has to meet its failure, a failure which will prove the vanity of domination. Our men who are near to the facts and have nothing to intoxicate them, grimly do their grim duty, and are united in their fighting pacifism. For the trenches are peopled with pacifists, and they would resent bitterly any one's saying that they like war, since they make it; or that they make it through blindness and credulity.

Three days before the war broke out some of us had doubts about the decisions of socialists and syndicalists. These men would never, never have fallen in line with conquering armies. But when they saw that France did all that was possible to prevent war, that our soldiers had been withdrawn

six miles from the border in order to avoid any possible incident, and that it was really a war of right against might, then they threw all their might—as did America—on the right side. It is extremely instructive to read the articles written by Hervé, the anti-militarist leader, who led a daily patriotic fight in his paper, *Le Guerre Sociale*, later *La Victoire*, and who was among the first to welcome *l'Union Sacrée*. He saw clearly that, in order to save peace, the unchaining of war had not to be left successful and unchastened. He did not the less maintain his democratic standards, attacking the wrong use of censorship, defending free discussion. But he joined the unanimous fight for the end of wars and the defeat of dangerous ambitions.

How is this result to happen? We cannot yet outline the exact details, but we all believe it will happen through a certain common interpretation of democracy; and that is why we believe in democracy not as a dream, but as a mighty reality, whose first effect will be to prevent the return of world calamities like this.

I say: a common interpretation of democracy. And indeed if something like a league of nations, a common work for common purpose, has to be brought about, it can be only by a common interpretation of the term which we are now using as a

watchword. That term, with all the various motives that it involves, has to be carefully defined, again and again, in all the allied countries. The more we can express in common now the easier the task will be at the end of the war, the further we will be able to carry our first common results.

Now let me tell, under my own responsibility, what I mean by democracy, I being a man at least independent from political parties, and having observed a little, in various countries of our Western World and of the Near East during this crisis.

Democracy is a name for a common basis; it is the ground on which every personal, independent, original life can be erected. It is not an end by itself, as the German conception of the State or the Roman conception of the Empire. It is a beginning. It is not a ceiling. It is a floor; the main floor, for all human undertaking, to be built upon. It is not a limitation to individuality, it is a protection for it.

And if I may express my full thought: I, as a Frenchman and as a writer, if I stand for Democracy it is because it offers the safest and most acceptable and loyal basis for individualism. By individualism I don't mean egoism and selfish aims. The highest aim for individual life is self-sacrifice. But it has to be free sacrifice. Sacrifice to what

you choose and love and want to serve. Not to a mechanical, artificial State which has been imposed upon you, and where everything is provided for, except your own possibility of a choice, or right to a choice.

It has been objected that in order to fight we had to prussianize ourselves. Yes, of course the belligerents get prussianized. . . . And what I welcome there is that they will have one more reason to hate war. But please, do not believe that after centuries of ardent struggle for more liberty a sudden external cause might destroy that aspiration in us. The spirit of liberty has deeper roots, or it would not be worth speaking of! France gives testimony that she loves liberty more than she ever did, for any useless restriction to her liberties provokes violent and ever-ready resistance.

Our hearts have not so easily lost their robust love for freedom. And we had rather get apparently prussianized for a time, and disgusted with it, than get prussianized forever, and the world with us, by permitting the Prussian victory.

That would mean intense, deep, definitive germanization of everything, and of yourselves, by the irresistible prestige of success. Through education, imitation, and through sheer necessity, German methods of competition would rule the world, each

German would become a missionary of the compulsory Doctrine. Individual freedom would be put 100 years back. If only France had proved weaker, or America more indifferent, that fate would have been ours, and yours. That is why our soldiers are really dying for Democracy when they resist German world-domination.

I hope that I am as far as possible from being paradoxical. Democracy is a matter of common sense, as much as art and private life are matters of personal sense. Things have to be made clear, and I suppose they are, in the mind of a great number, and of most of the fighting men, and they only need to be formulated, as they scarcely begin to be.

On the origin of this war, that it is a war of conquest and oppression, I suppose we agree. A principle was violated when Austria, already detaining Serbian provinces, attacked the little kingdom. And that principle is not a recent invention, although it appears to be still too new for the rulers of the Central Powers. It has been enunciated very clearly by Turgot when he said about America's right to independence: "It is a strange thing that it be not yet a commonplace truth to say that no nation can ever have the right to govern another nation; that such a government has no other forma-

tion than force, which is also the foundation of brigandage and tyranny. . . ."

This is today a commonplace for us. It is not yet so for the Germans. The impulse which led you into this war is the same which made us go to your rescue, and made Franklin say of us: "This nation is fond of glory, particularly that of protecting the oppressed."

Our common purpose has been splendidly defined by the President of these States. His address to the Senate on January 22, 1917, extending the Monroe doctrine to the world, already said: "There is no entangling alliance in a concert of power. When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose, all act in the common interest and are free to live their own lives under a common protection." On March 6th, he emphasized the new situation of America. In his address of April 3, he pronounced the famous words:

"We are at the beginning of an age in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong done shall be observed among nations and their governments that are observed among the individual citizens of civilized states. . . .

. . . "The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested

foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. . . . We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them. . . .

. . . "We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of rights by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free."

And the sense of our actual, of our Second Alliance, has been well defined by M. Jusserand in his short speech on May 3d in the House of Representatives of the United States, when he said:

"What you do now is to come to Europe to take part in the fight for liberty, a fight in which you expect no recompense, no advantage, except that very great advantage, that in the same way that we helped to secure liberty—human liberty, individual liberty, national liberty—on this continent, you will fight to see that liberty be preserved in the broad family of nations.

"Thanks to you, we shall see the calamities of

this struggle shortened, and a new spirit of liberty grow greater and stronger, pervade all countries and indeed fill the world."

Since then I read in the papers that when General Pershing landed at Boulogne, General Dumas, who is not a diplomat nor a theorician, but the commander of our Northern region, said to him:

"Your coming opens a new era in the history of the world. The United States of America is now taking its part with the United States of Europe. Together they are about to found the United States of the World, which will definitely and finally end the war and give a peace which will be enduring and fruitful for humanity."

This expresses, I think, the belief of our average Frenchman. And why should that hope prove to be vain? It is reasonable, on the contrary, since it expresses the will of the overwhelming majority, in a matter where the majority will have to decide.

And if the result is attained once for all, then the huge, untold sacrifice will not have been made in vain.

III

PROMISES OF CONCRETE CO-OPERATION

New conditions of work in Europe, nearer to the American conditions, because of the scarcity of men and the necessity of rapid reconstruction. American methods to be brought. The new spirit of economic activity in France. A writer on French labor. An instance of common task: co-operation in the countries which are economically backward, but jealous of national independence, and will welcome the Franco-American enterprises.

FIRST of all we must squarely face the facts. At the finish of the war France is going to find herself placed in a new and complex economic situation, as will also be the case with those nations bound to her by definite ties. Practicable suggestions for meeting this coming situation can be supplied only by men able to see and point out with equal frankness both its most encouraging and its most alarming aspects. Nothing will be accomplished by those who are too easily satisfied by cut-and-dried formulæ, who allow themselves to be hypnotized by fixed optimistic or pessimistic theories. The future is neither easy nor desperate. Only, more

than at any previous period, the future will depend upon ourselves.

The situation as it exists today contains the germ of a brilliant tomorrow; it holds also the seeds of ruin. It contains possibilities that make one's heart leap as before the dawn of certain victory. But before us, too, may lie the abyss. Still, there is a bridge by which we may cross it.

How shall we set to work—*now*, we and our friends? For from the day that peace is declared, all those energies that are now diverted to the work of death and destruction will be clamouring to take up life's work in full measure, without losing a moment. We shall merit small thanks from those who are fighting if we have made ready nothing against their return save shouts of joy. It is their right to expect more than that of our foresight.

Never before has man been faced with a future so pregnant with possibilities. Now, possibilities entail responsibilities. And what is first and foremost plain and inescapable before our eyes is the great responsibility that will rest upon France and her true friends. It is no new responsibility. We recognized and assumed it long ago, at whatever cost to us. It will continue. Who wants to share it with us?

Our prestige has been restored. Frenchmen of today will have a far easier task than those of before the war, whose mission was to carry on France's work somehow or other, throughout a world rendered indifferent and sceptical by our defeats of 1870. They succeeded, at that; but they were few. Those of tomorrow will be legion. Like the sturdy workers that they are, resourceful lads, keen for their jobs, they will go forth to the four corners of the earth, after playing their part—and what a part!—in freeing the world through force of arms, to sow the good seed of their labours. And reaping the harvest to follow, France will arise, rich.

For this too we must say, frankly and simply: "France must be rich." Therein lies the remedy for all her dangers and her ills—infant mortality, tuberculosis, and kindred scourges. Our valiant little family groups, endowed with all the virtues though they be, are frequently crushed beneath material difficulties, which, being excessive and overwhelming, go not at all to develop character.

Similarly, it is for lack of money to buy better milk, for lack of money to instal bathrooms, to live more out of doors, to buy sports, technical education, recreation—for all these things are to be had for money—it is for lack of this money that too

many of our children die, too many of our gifted young people have to stop midway in their education, too many of our families go downhill, too many of our intellectual and moral resources wither away before they have bloomed. We must tell things as they are. Pierre Hamp writes: "We are face to face with this moral necessity: France must be rich."

Now the world has everything to gain by seeing to it that the fruit in France's garden does not dry up, and the world is well aware of it. France is no greedy power, undertaking to dominate through numbers, through intrusion and invasion, and against whom the world must ever be on its guard. France is a well-spring of creative power, a land of spiritual, scientific, and social experiments and experiences. All mankind suffers a little by her distress, and profits by her prosperity. Let her emerge rich from the great effort she is about to put forth, and those who go to her will find her happier. Those who have been wont to look to her for inspiration will find an even more abundant treasure within her gates. Those who trade with her will have a chance both to give and receive more.

What are the obstacles in the way of this prosperity? Our small population? Certainly not.

Inferior numbers are a menace in case of war—we know that only too well! But on the other hand the nation overdensely populated is the one that finds itself handicapped in the attempt to assign congenial work to all its citizens.

No, the obstacles can be reduced to two fundamental ones: First, the world's imperfect information about us and our ways, partly through our own fault; second, some mistaken and prejudiced individual viewpoints that especially characterized our fellow-countrymen of the past half-century. It is to overcome the first of these handicaps that *The New France* magazine has undertaken its task, a task long awaited and long called-for.¹ I wish here to say a few additional words as to the other obstacle to our expansion.

Mistaken viewpoints on the part of individuals, I said. Indeed, henceforth it is vitally important that every one of us assume his responsibilities to the full, and rely as little as possible upon the State and public organizations. We are, as is also the

¹ These lines were written for the magazine, *New France*, and published in its first issue, August, 1917. The purpose of the magazine is to prepare for the future by giving expression to Franco-American ideas upon commercial developments and to promote the spirit of practical co-operation between the two countries. The editors are Denys Amiel, Swinburne Hale and Deems Taylor, and its address is 165 Broadway, New York.

United States, an individualist nation. Let us be so, frankly and utterly. Above all, let us promote personal intercourse, the relations of man to man—particularly among the younger men, who will be especially unfettered in their future activities.

Let me repeat: what will save us is an intensive development of a personal sense of responsibility. Man must consent to being judged, not according to what he is or what he *can* do, but by what he has actually done, what values he is actually creating. This method is unjust, possibly; but the world has no time to learn others. Now the French have always kept their good qualities below the surface, in the form, rather, of potentialities. Travelling through Germany in 1913, I saw clearly that the prosperity of that empire was due, not so much to its organization—and still less to any exceptional qualities of the German—as to a patient and painstaking development of every resource.

We French have chosen rather to keep our resources locked up, to hold them in reserve, like the hidden treasure that economists call “unproductive wealth.” Among prosperous peoples, the secret of success lies not in such and such a particular quality, to be found nowhere else; it lies in mobilizing all their capabilities. And so reforms must be

accomplished, not through the State, nor by means of treaties, but through the medium of every individual intelligence, every will.

Understand me clearly: I do not set up material success as the only goal of French activities; but, if one be an intelligent Frenchman, engaged in business, a wide ambition is his first duty.

Now, unless we entirely misunderstand the tendencies of our younger men, that is on the whole just the direction in which the rising generation is tending. Ignorance of other countries, which so held back our predecessors, had already begun to disappear during the past ten years, thanks to numerous outside influences, to an exchange of views that was continuously developing—an intellectual exchange with England, America, and Russia. This intermingling has been hastened during the course of the war by the presence of so many foreign armies upon our soil, and by the countless personal relations that necessarily resulted. Of course, you will always find youths who are determined not to learn anything, but there will be fewer and fewer of them in the future, and they will be less and less proud of their ignorance. On the whole, it would seem that, as far as ignorance of the outside world is concerned, France is by no

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means the least informed. But we must not forget that the best is expected from us.

There is one essential element of the French character, much more inherent in us than ignorance of other peoples, which, it seems to me, explains the cause of certain of our failings and at the same time offers us our best hope for co-operation between the young men of America and France. That is, our tendency to criticise—a certain intellectual, critical, negative tendency, which too easily turns into mockery. It is the faculty to which the best of us owe their sense of proportion and the clear thinking for which they are noted. Now, the American is gifted with precisely the opposite faculty—a positive, enterprising tendency to go after immediate results. He is embarrassed by very few hesitations, since up to the present the obstacles before him in his own country, which is always a fruitful field for new enterprises, have been much less serious than in ours.

Today, however, conditions in the two countries are growing more and more alike. America is no longer a limitless field open to virgin energy, while old Europe is becoming committed to a policy of hasty reconstruction and wide enterprise. Thus our differences are being levelled; and thus may

each of us profit more and more by the experience and methods of the other.

And so a double obligation rests upon us: for America, that of reconciling its methods with new conditions; for France, that of adopting new ways of putting to work the vast treasure of past experience, knowledge, and resourcefulness that the ages have bequeathed to our race. If both of us will resolve to combine this inherited craft skill and science of life with your audacity, your passion for visible and immediate results, little success will remain beyond our reach.

After all, our activities rest upon a common base, upon a feeling which tends to bring us together and through which we seem, to me, to be blood-brothers among the peoples of the world. That feeling is the love of work for its own sake, love of the task that we have freely chosen. Our devotion to this work is limitless, provided always that our right to a free choice be respected. Now it is just this right of free choice that characterizes the "kind of world" in which we want to live, as opposed to the super-disciplined "State" world in which our enemies want to make us live—a kind of world that suits them, maybe, but that inspires us with little but horror.

We believe, Americans and French alike (and here I speak above all in the name of the younger generation), in the free choice of a lifework. We believe that into this chosen calling one can put the best of himself, serving whole-heartedly because he knows that there exists no better or more fruitful field for the forces at his disposal. We believe that once our efficiency is brought to its highest through this faith in our work, we have nothing to fear from the competition of any one. We believe that a calling freely chosen is like a wife chosen from among all women: that, like her, it will bear us fine children.

What an ugly, vulgar, stupid idea it is, to conceive of the whole of human activity as a pitched battle where the victory of one necessarily entails the ruin of others. It is a worn-out and thick-witted theory, worthy only of jealous and greedy peoples. France and America have never admitted its truth, knowing full well that the world profited by every step they made forward. They have always felt that, in reality, nations should be set, not one against the other, but side by side, so as to face together the increasingly complex problems of life. (Thus did Péguy describe the philosophers, and point out the true significance of their competitions

and quarrels.) It is thus that we conceive the energies of the world drawn up to weather the fearful crisis that has arrayed them together against a common danger. If the world, co-operating to assure the necessary defeat of Germany's lust for conquest, has been able to unite upon this negative program, what is to prevent it from organizing tomorrow upon a positive, lasting basis? Why can it not unite and found itself upon the rock of the most enduring sentiment that is rooted in the heart of man: *the love of one's own handiwork*?

It is the young men of America and France who shall offer us not one, but millions of examples of the goal that may be attained, the results that may be realized through a voluntary alliance like ours, when sprung into full life.

Love for work— Do you realize how deeply that love is rooted in the Frenchman's heart?

A writer, Pierre Hamp, has given strong, vivid, accurate descriptions of the labourious life of France. He makes us discover the molecular process of the trades and industries, a process which is not much known. He himself, like Jack London, has had a long direct experience of the things he describes, before he became an Inspector of Labour. His former work includes several books: *Le Rail*

(he was then a railway man), *Marée Fraîche* (he had been a sailor too), *Vin de Champagne* (he knew the details of its whole fabrication). But I want to present only his three little, dense booklets, published during the war. Perhaps they are the most valuable contribution to knowledge of the actual conditions among the civil working class during the crisis. You will find there much which will surprise you. . . .

The first of these books, *Le Travail Invincible*, is a picture of the conditions of work in Northern France.

"Flanders had seen the passing of the great Belgian migration, pushed on by the German army—flax-pickers of the Courtrai region, still carrying their blue wallets, straggling crowds of women dragging along tired children. In their wake, the Flemings of France were leaving also, fleeing their villages wrecked by German shells. The fugitives filled the railroad trains to overflowing, crammed, standing, into coal cars. Across Flanders, from La Bassée to the Yser, was one great battle. The Germans fell back, freeing Hazebrouck, Bailleul, and Armentières. But their trenches stretched before this treasure house: Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing.

"In all this upheaval and destruction what be-

came of industry? Factories all over the region had been damaged by artillery fire. Thousands of skilled workmen had been driven into exile—an exile often deadlier, through overcrowding, starvation, and cold, than the bombardment suffered by those who stayed behind. But no sooner were the Germans gone than the people began to come back and resume work. The industrial ‘front’ kept pace with the firing line. This movement will be a magnificent one to follow in some future systematized history of labour during the war. In the valley of the Lys, the weaving mills stopped work on the 6th of October, halted by the bombardment. On October 15th the Germans were repulsed; by the 25th, the cloth-looms were whirring and clashing again in the mills. Whenever their noise stopped, at lunch-hour and at night, one could hear the musketry fire in the trenches.

“When the German army bombards an open town, a town whose streets end in the furrows of the fields, it claims to be accomplishing the legitimate military objects of striking demoralization and terror into the civilian population. This is so, at the first bombardment. Those who are terrified flee. By the time the second bombardment takes place the town has taken its precautions and has comfortably fitted up its cellars. By the tenth bom-

bardment it is a town inured to war. The persistence of the German artilleryman has created a new virtue; under habitual fire the civilian population displays the firmness of veteran troops.

"The cellars are used for sleeping, the best fitted having a fame of their own. Some of them are comfortably furnished, with cloth hangings on the walls. The cellar windows are blocked with sand bags or bulwarks, each of the latter consisting of two timbers with the crack between them stuffed with rubbish. These cave fortifications encroach upon the sidewalks all along the streets.

"The night bombardment is the less dangerous. By day, blood is more quickly shed when the town is caught unawares. Summer is the season of street games for the little ones, and the first shell of the morning may fall near three children who are quietly playing together before their house. Their mothers had said 'Don't go far!' and they have been very obedient; but they will never return to their mothers' knees.

"The town that no longer knows fear feels indignation. The tiny corpse of a child instils a horror of Germany within the breasts of those who follow it to the grave. No more may her citizens come here to trade or to supply machinery."

And in the fields the peasant shows the same faithfulness to the task:

“English and German shells pass over the tilled fields, and the husbandman can hear the rifle fire in the trenches. Ever since November it has been coming from exactly the same places. Now, however, it seems as though the subterranean battle had moved further off; the noise is muffled. As the ears of grain grow, the sound of rifle shots is correspondingly absorbed by the thickness of the verdure.

“This labourer is unconquerable. The tilling of the earth imposes an obligation which nothing can remove, not even the risk of death. For the man of the fields, war is only a passing storm. He bows before it, and continues his task, big with eternity.”

Pierre Hamp adds: “There is a humble greatness about these civilians who hold so doggedly to their everyday jobs, these factory women who brave shells to go to work. Next to the soldier who defends the soil, the factory girl who sticks to her work is the one who makes France immortal. . . . The moral value of work increases in war-time, when the idleness of non-combatants might easily injure the morale of the whole race, and might lower the earning capacity of the labouring classes

through loss of skill. These working girls who, as they put it, don't want to get out of practice, and go on at their task, are saving the basic power of the country—a thing that must never perish. War is transitory. Labour is eternal."

And he concludes: "Man's purest grandeur resides in plying well his trade. It is not enthusiasm that he needs for this, but professional conscience."

I gave long quotations, because I find this one of the most valuable war accounts that I know.

The second booklet is perhaps the richest in documentation on the new conditions of work, much nearer to American conditions because of the scarcity of men. (That is why, after the war, we shall have so much to learn from your methods.) Already Hamp is able to foresee the reach of possible application of these methods.

"The American method is above all applicable to industries turning out large quantities of the same pattern of objects—automobiles, typewriters, or shells—and where the total amount of work involved in making a product that is always unvarying can be subdivided into separate operations.

"It would be fantastic to attempt to apply the American method unaltered to the French nation. It must be gallicized and made over to suit our

labouring-class mental processes. Experiment alone will show where it can be welded to our system and where there are gaps to bridge. It would break down everything to apply a concept based and calculated solely upon new forces and ideas to a society permeated with old forces and traditions."

So there will be an adjustment, and it will require much attention and mutual understanding. Hamp then treats the difficult matter of emigration, which, too, demands unprejudiced minds in order to be solved according to the actual requirements of a country. Then he reveals what the work of the women has been, during the war, and what tremendous step has been made in that respect. "Woman has not suddenly become courageous with the war. She merely continues to be so. Having been already engaged in a great variety of occupations, she had some preliminary training when she turned to metallurgy for war purposes." In the shell factories hundreds of thousands of them are now working. Hamp notices that even there they remain women, and this is together charming and melancholic.

"They bind their heads with a piece of linen to protect their hair from the dust of glowing iron, incidentally leaving a curl or two to wander—for

in all her tasks, hard as they may be, nothing will take away from woman her desire to be attractive. The instinct for beauty is unconquerable in her. Even here, where woman is identified with man in her work, and where the social necessities have tended to deprive her of her sex, she preserves the remnants of her charm, and keeps on smiling to save a world that is destroying itself.

“No workshop, however dusty, hot or smelly, has ever conquered the desire of woman to remain a woman. Exhausted, overheated, and pale, she still smiles. She accomplishes this double and terrible task—to work as much as a man and at the same time preserve the softness of the world and perpetuate the race.

“It was formerly thought that woman’s care could not be trusted when very exact measurements had to be made, but the eyes of an embroiderer are sharper than those of a man, and machines for making light artillery presented few difficulties to her. The adjustment and testing of a shell fuse require careful attention; no defects are tolerated. The adjuster has to discover errors that the workmen have overlooked. This delicate work is just the reverse of the heavy forging, as the working woman uses only her eyes and the tips of her fingers. Long tables are covered with copper pieces ar-

ranged in perfect order. The women must make sure that every piece is in perfect condition and exact in calibre, by means of delicate steel gauges, for the slightest defect may prevent the shell from exploding or make it explode in the guns. No magnifying glass is used for this operation, lest the consequent exaggeration of mere scratches should make them appear as serious defects and cause all shells to be rejected. The naked eye must suffice, and a sharp look-out is needed to discover all the tool marks. Since this means a great strain on the eyes all such work is done by daylight for fear of errors resulting from fatigue.

"In a shop where 844 women are employed, only three defective adjustments out of 80,000 fuses were noted by the inspectors and, after examination, only one fuse was discarded. Thus in such an amount of delicate work requiring so much attention, only one mistake was discovered—one in 80,000—in a day chosen at random by the inspectors. Sometimes there is not a single mistake."

Her salary has grown, and if it seems low compared with American prices, still it is much higher than the former wages of a dressmaker. It is now about one dollar a day for the easier work. Better skilled workers may reach 9 francs for ten hours.

"Women from all classes of society have applied

for jobs in metal working for war purposes. The offices of workshops know of women who walked by ten times before they decided to step in, and finally did so with tears in their eyes, on account of their prejudice against working with their hands. One of them was a Belgian lady of leisure whose fortune was left in Brussels; another, the wife of a South American bank director. In a few days, unaccustomed as these women were to such work, they had learned how to handle machine tools. In a month they had become skilful. The adaptation to work of women's delicate hands does not require a long time. Embroidery, sewing and household occupations have all accustomed them to the handling of materials. The power to work is in them.

"The hands of so many men never touch anything but cigarettes and penholders. This war has revealed the great adaptability of woman to manual labour. She succeeds in all trades, both in the hardest and in the most delicate.

"Out of 4,473 women workers brought together in a shell factory in Lyons, there are registered:

- 1,326 housewives and servants;
- 1,320 dressmakers;
- 690 shop workers;
- 360 office girls;
- 23 stenographers;
- 349 lacemakers, weavers and box-makers;

143 of various trades;
236 without any profession;
16 mechanics.

“These women, among whom five per cent. only had any previous experience with some minor form of metal working, have in a few months, thanks to cleverly devised machinery, developed a strong and efficient working body. They have replaced 44.9 per cent. of the men in a total of 9,985 employés.”

Of course, immense social consequences are to result from such possibilities which woman discovered in herself. “A woman whose living is insured by employment will feel independent in her home. How will fairly well-paid labour react upon the woman’s heart?” There is a conflict between motherhood and work. Pierre Hamp’s conclusion brings a very enlightening interpretation of the present situation:

“Our national interest of the moment is directly opposed to our permanent national interest, to what really constitutes the perpetuation of France: a sufficient number of Frenchmen. A proper concern for our prosperity demands that we turn ourselves deliberately into a country of immigration, attracting healthy stock and reducing our necessary working forces as far as possible by the ingenuity of mechanical inventions.”

Here again, we find the necessity of carefully adopting American example. For this we are confident in the infinite resources of improvisation which are in the race:

“This labouring force of France, which must always be organized in times of need, has had its total strength calculated by the war, has shown its full vitality and flexibility. Victorious, it will have learned through perils its possibilities for triumph in time of peace. All that it was called upon to do, it has done. It will go on doing so. Experienced by an effort that aroused it to activity from the first rifle to the last hammer, the nation learned that it could devour the maddened enemy with its cannon and reap a triumphant fortune from its labour. From France’s war strength will spring her peace strength. She has been through an experience that has revealed her to herself. She will know how to make her strength a lasting one by maintaining for her industry the power called forth by battle. Her organization for military victory will also help to create her industrial rank. And may she make peace with the same spirit with which she has made war. Every victory is within her. From France the warrior country will arise France the labouring country.”

Hamp's third pamphlet, "La Victoire de la France sur les Français," is more of a program and an affirmation of general ideas about the future of France. He points out the dangers, and outlines the remedies. The victory over alcohol is won, if the measures taken against it in time of war are maintained. But France wants a reform in her habits of mind and methods of action. A victory of the Frenchman over himself, or rather of the immortal spirit of France over temporary hesitations. This reform was rapidly preparing before the war. "May the young men who have helped to write Victory upon the banners of their regiments strive with equal might to place the names of foreign branches upon the letterheads of our commercial houses."

And there is an expression of unlimited hope to be found in his last conclusions:

"The power latent within us is unknown even to ourselves. We bear within our breasts triumphs as yet unawakened. Our strength in this war has surprised ourselves. Under the shock of reality we have discovered anew our ancient valour and the strength of our limbs. France is far above the conception that the world had formed of her and that she had formed of herself. Let us venerate this mysterious power of our race, whence spring

victories for men to wonder at. . . . Let us not doubt ourselves. We are perfectly capable of tremendous and prolonged effort. We can conquer all within ourselves that threatens France."

Of course, I realize that much that I have said about the possibilities of our concrete co-operation is abstract and vague, and that the young American who reads me has no taste for indulging in uncertain schemes, but wants immediate instances, or at least instances likely to be valuable immediately after the war. He may argue that everybody should then make good, and ask if French co-operation will offer a chance to him rather than to his grandchildren.

Let me show that I had some immediate instance in mind. It is a local and definite one, and I give it because I happen to know the subject well. I suppose that other Frenchmen, if questioned, can give many instances like this one, which has to be generalized.

I have travelled on five occasions in the Balkans, especially through Serbia and the Southern Slav countries. These people are the only strong obstacle to Pan-Germanism on its way to the East. They are sturdy and fine. They are warriors and

artists. They love their nation and have decided that she shall not die. They have suffered from the war more than any other people, except, perhaps, the Armenians and the Poles. But there are still about 12 millions of them, resolved to struggle ceaselessly until they obtain freedom for their Yugoslav (Southern Slav) nation. That is a simple and irresistible aspiration, and, like America, Italy and Switzerland in older times, they will succeed because their will is steadfast and their opponents are changing their artificial policies according to circumstances. Their situation is like Bohemia's, and Poland's. When these people are free, then Europe will have a chance of peace, not before. That much even the diplomats admit today. So there is an increasing probability of an early and righteous settlement of this national question.¹

Now look at this Jugoslavia made free. It includes Serbia restored, and the Austro-Hungarian provinces which are almost entirely peopled by Serbians and their brothers, the Croats and Slovenes. It extends from the vicinity of Italian Trieste to the province of Temesvar, from the Adriatic coast to the Bulgarian frontier, where the Orient racially begins. Even if national aspira-

¹ See the books of H. Wickham Steed, R. W. Seton-Watson, etc.

tions are not fully realized at first, it will have outlets on the Adriatic Sea, which means direct and free communication with all Western nations. The area of the land is equal to about one-half of France. It contains many mines (the copper mines at Bor were the most prosperous in the world, and were exploited by a French concern), large forests, great wealth in fruit, fish, and cattle, and large industries of cloth, embroideries, silverwork, etc.

Jugoslavia has been maintained for ages in a state economically backward because all the forces of the country were employed in a military struggle against invasion and resistance to oppression. Conditions were made as hard as possible by mighty Austria, for fear that the national spirit would spread from free Serbia to oppressed Bosnia, Croatia and Dalmatia.

In the near future, a tremendous economic expansion will take place there. The race is very laborious. But the people are poor, and lack the technicians and the machines. Who will bring them? Assuredly not the Germans. Even before this war the Serbians preferred to sacrifice large advantages to permitting themselves to be invaded through economic participation on the part of ambitious and hostile countries.

For a similar reason they will hardly welcome

the rush of business men, speculators and exploiters from some countries, although friendly, for they are too jealous of their national integrity to allow important positions to be occupied by foreigners who may at some time become exigent and, if backed by their governments, jeopardize the safety of the country. Small nations have to be cautious about such things.

But from France and from America nothing of that kind is to be feared—we could not even dream of territorial ambitions in those regions. And it happens that America and France are the only two nations who have accomplished a great deal for the Southern Slavs—France, by a long tradition of friendship, by helping to rebuild the Serbian army at Corfu and maintaining the occupation of Salonica, also by welcoming the Serbian refugees on her territory, and taking up the education of Serbian children; America by steady and generous relief and the sending of surgical and medical missions who have done most effective work.

After the war, if my previsions are right, Franco-American activity will find a most favourable ground in Jugoslavia, America bringing her methods and material, France bringing the experience of her men, long used to travel there and to business negotiations with the Serbians, being entirely sym-

pathetic to them and having fought side by side with them.

But what special interest will young America have in bringing resources of energy to that part of the world? First, the opportunities for rapid success are numerous: reconstruction of cities on modern plans, undertaking of large harbours, the lumber industry, agricultural improvements, means of transportation. The country is healthful and the peasants are intensely democratic. Many young men want broad enterprises and wish also to live within reasonable proximity to civilized centres. They and their wives will appreciate the fact that Southern Slav territory is a few hours from Italy, and one day and a half from Paris.

I shall not dwell on this suggestion. It is but one instance among many, of the wide activities open to American initiative. Russia is another—much wider, but more distant from the great cities of Western Europe. There again, the true form of successful association would be Franco-American. More exactly, young men from France and young men from America, knowing each other well. And the same is applicable to our colonies.

IV

LITERARY INTERCHANGE

Forms of influence. Is external influence to be welcome? American writers who are known in France. About French criticism. Translations of literature. Educational exchanges. The philosophers. The literary treasury of contemporary France. Our masters and elders. Recent tendencies. Emile Verhaeren's international value. The new poets of France: More children of Walt Whitman. Schools, groups and critics. The Reviews. War poems. And then? Music in France.

WE have dealt with the concrete foundations and structure of our alliance. Our material exchanges and co-operation will give results little by little. As early as today we may see the effects of mutual intellectual influence.

Here again, the field is too wide to be covered in its entirety. Even to show the parallel evolution and the mutual indebtedness of American and French literary standards in the past 25 years, would be the task of a lifetime and, when achieved, it would have to be started again.

So as to grasp the present condition of our literary relation, we may specially concern ourselves with the poets. The best of the young poets sup-

ply the essential expression of a generation, they are usually in advance of it, and they inspire the period which follows. Moreover, they supply the most conscious form of art and that which is most closely connected with ethics. Poets are essentially initiators, and the literary production of the following epoch largely depends upon them. The work of American orators and novelists might have been regarded mainly as a branch of English literature until American poets came and gave the start to new forms of expression and discovered fresh sources of inspiration. After them there was an original American literature. A good part of political and social ideals is influenced by poets. This may not be true of the sad epoch that preceded us, but it was true of most great epochs whose grandeur was often formulated or even foretold by poets. The Italian and French Renaissance, the Italian Risorgimento in the 19th century, the liberal agitation in Germany about 1848,¹ the national movements in India and in Ireland had their poets who were their leaders at the same time. In America, I see the germ of an approaching poetical expansion which may be

¹ See the recent book about Georg Herwegh, the great revolutionary poet who fought Prussianism all his life. (Recueil Sirey, publisher, Paris.)

splendid. In France what has already been accomplished I shall try to sum up here. The question is, What is and what will be the reciprocal action of our writers?

Let us go back for a while. The mere nomenclature of your great writers who had a part in the intellectual and esthetical formation of our own would not be so soon achieved as your modesty might suppose. I was 10 years old when I read Fenimore Cooper. I was 12 when I was presented with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 15 when I knew Longfellow. At 19 I read Poe, with the utmost admiration at the very time that I knew the works of the French Symbolist school. I could see what immense importance Edgar Allan Poe had had for those pure artists against whom we reacted, but from whom we descend all the same. . . . Poe had strongly impressed Baudelaire, who translated his tales, and Mallarmé did the same for the poems.

I was 23 when I plunged myself into the *Leaves of Grass*. This succession is that of decreasing popularity. I hear that S. Butler and Thoreau are being translated into French, and that a new French edition of Whitman will soon appear, our best writers having co-operated in the work of translation. Some of your other writers are nearly unknown in France. Hawthorne, Whittier, Bret

Harte have practically never reached there. As for the influence of French writers on your own productions, I leave it to American scholars to define.

The literature of a country may be influenced, from abroad, in two principal ways. First, by foreign writers who are admired, absorbed, imitated. Second, by the readers which are abroad, of works from one's own country, readers who accept or reject those works. As the majority of foreign readers are informed and cultivated, the more this last becomes important.

In the instance of our two countries, this is how I understand our literary relations: The greatest need for France will be to feel the abundant, vigorous, generous production of your young writers whose inspiration is related to her own. If we happen to hesitate they will reassure us, owing to their solid virtue of genuine and direct inspiration. And your writers themselves declare that they will welcome the critical sanction of our older literary sense.

Then there is also that reciprocal influence which will develop from the French reader to the American writer. If our relations hold their promise, works written here will be eagerly read, either in English or in translation, by our people, who will see more and more what resources of vitality and

sincerity are in you. And the French reader, when his sympathy is once aroused, and his negative sense withdrawn a little, is not too bad a critic. We are all of us everywhere too prone to pass sentence on things before we have made acquaintance with them. But when France's admiration is fixed her choice is usually the right one. Perhaps this is because we have still some traces of classical sense left, and classical is to time what universal is to space. Thus it is not surprising that a good training in classical should prepare for a sound appreciation of universal literature.

Criticism, applied to your work, I propose, of course, in a quite modest form. If the French do not appreciate a book of yours, it does not prove that the book is bad. But if they elect it, admire it, love it, adopt and imitate it, and get impregnated with it, as they have in instances already, then you may be sure that you have a right to be proud of its author.

Having said this, is it necessary to raise once more the eternal question: Are influences good in themselves? Is foreign influence to be desired or to be feared? My opinion is that of many of our contemporaries. It is that inasmuch as you are strong and have faith and confidence in yourself, you can welcome most unreservedly the influences

from abroad, fearless that they will carry you out of yourself. Convinced traditionalists ought to be the first to welcome new influences, first because our very traditions (yours and mine) are largely made of foreign influences which were assimilated; an additional reason for such welcome is that the shock and criticism of the foreign thing give precisely the opportunity needed for testing one's own solidity. And a certain, solid, faithful, valuable tradition need not be afraid of the test. We realize that our stomach is good enough to dare try more than one kind of food. If we happen to refuse some foreign dish, it may not mean that it is exactly perilous, but that it is of bad taste or is prepared with hands which are not clean (I am thinking of German culture during the past quarter of a century).

About the benefits of this intellectual exchange between us, I can already testify in what concerns me, and tell what encouragement, what intense stimulation I have met in your country, and not only for my present task. What enthusiastic confirmation I found here, of the value of the works I admired, when I compared my standards with those of your best young writers. Indeed I cannot yet measure all that I owe to those meetings and conversations in New York, in Chicago, in Boston, in Princeton, not

only for the knowledge gained of your literature, but for a better appreciation of my own country's art.¹

A last answer to a question which is often asked: What is the good of translations? A translation never gives the content of the original and is liable to pervert and falsify the impression which the reader would get if he knew its original language. If he cannot obtain the direct influence of the work, for lack of knowing the language in which it is written, then he had better abstain from any incomplete and delusive science.

I am quite willing to agree that definitively a translation cannot be equal to an original (although it has sometimes proved to be superior). But I am obliged to confess that I have received through translations stimuli which were exceedingly intense. The influence of the Russian novelists on the whole modern world has exerted itself almost exclusively through translations, often through very bad ones. The same in the case of Ibsen. The translations from the English into French usually

¹ A step in the work of mutual interchange is the organization of systematic sending of the best reviews and books published on each side. Another is my translation into French of Miss A. Lowell's work on the *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (American edition published by The Macmillan Co.). I also intend to give in France a number of studies on contemporary American writers.

were good, and the translations of Kipling by L. Fabulet and R. d'Humières, were excellent. The French version of the *Just So Stories* is a little masterpiece.

I wish all young writers indulged in the regular practice of translation. It is a wonderful training in the use of their own language. I cannot sufficiently advise my American friends that they take the French books which they like and feel to be nearest to their own spirit, and try to give them a form in English. An unexpected communion is attained by this exercise, one which is deeper than any attained through mere reading. It is akin to the pleasure of creation in the company of an author you admire. Now what authors shall I propose for this task? I shall suggest some in the two following chapters.

Before ending this, I want to say a few words about a special and very important form of intellectual exchange, and that is the educational form. A book was recently published which develops that matter much better and more completely than I could ever do.

It was issued by the Society of American Fellowships in French Universities, and is called *Science and Learning in France*.¹ It is the work of numer-

ous committees of specialists in every branch of knowledge, and hundreds of scholars have given their name as sponsors, expressing "a cordial desire to join with the authors in making this book a national homage, offered from the universities of America to the universities of France." At the head of the editorial committee are Professor H. Wigmore and Professor Charles H. Grandgent, and the preface is written by Professor Charles W. Eliot, Emeritus President of Harvard University.

This book is of great moral significance and notable practical value to the students. There is a remarkable study on French philosophers, acknowledging the part of initiator that France played in modern times. Twenty-one other matters are surveyed. About the general qualities of the French in matter of science and learning, Professor Eliot says: "These characteristics have proved to be extraordinarily permanent, abiding generation after generation, and surviving immense political and social changes. The French scholar is apt to be an open-minded man, receptive toward new ideas, and an ardent lover of truth, fluent, and progressive. The French scientists have rarely been extreme specialists, narrow in their interests and their chosen objects. They have recognized that no sci-

¹ R. R. Donnelly & Sons, The Lakeside Press, Chicago.

ence can be pursued successfully in isolation. . . . They have not been subdued by the elaborate sorting and compiling machinery of modern scholarship." We may infer from this splendid collective work that reciprocal influence in education is welcome and will know a brilliant future.

One of the questions I had to abandon, to my great regret, is that of the mutual influence of French and American philosophies. Indeed such matters cannot be dealt with in twenty lines. When I translated the works of Professor J. M. Baldwin and of Professor Ellwood of Missouri University, for the editions of the *Société de Sociologie*, I had a good chance to appreciate the multiple points of resemblance in the American and French methods of thought, especially in the attitude of mind in grasping new questions. A conversation I had with Mr. Henri Bergson on that subject makes me hope that he will some time develop this point and that, thanks to him, we shall more fully know the deep motives, rooted in the very process of thought, which make our alliance what it is.

I shall now rapidly review the recent past of French literature, insisting on the poetical manifestations, as I am impatient to come to the con-

temporary poets who give expression to the soul of the young men who are my comrades. But it is indispensable to say from who we descend, who are our living masters. Another reason for calling attention to some important figures of the last period is that their value has not yet been fully recognized, and American readers will find an immense benefit in gleaning by themselves in this partly untrodden garden.

It is difficult to realize how little success is dependent upon merit, in France less than anywhere else. There is a non-modest explanation of it in the fact that talent being abundant, success could only reward it when it was joined with some social or commercial cleverness. But a better reason than over-abundance of genius is the extreme division of the public in little classes who do not easily adopt one another's admirations. So that a man known and silently admired by the very best, might remain all his life unrecognized except by a few hundred people.

The result and extreme consequence is that for a time, the true artists refused to compete for popularity, and made a system, a doctrine indeed, of their isolation. Thus, instead of being recognized after their death, like most of the great artists, they become known only after the passage of one genera-

tion of disciples. Now we can perceive rather clearly what were the characteristics of the best schools of 1890, which are today a part of France's classical past. First, they displayed extreme care for a perfect, original, rare form. They had contempt for easy sources of inspiration. They looked for an art that not only was entirely sufficient to itself, but that also despised life as ugly and poor. Art was a reaction against life and an evasion of life—a revenge against it. This is almost exactly the principle of Poe, for whom reality was poison, and this resulted in the perfectly pure and detached work of Mallarmé, among others. The result of that period was to leave us some admirable poems, like "*L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*," or Rimbaud's "*Bateau Ivre*." They are still the privilege of very few admirers.

Another result was the conquest of new forms in poetry. These poets did not accept the former laws of versification; but discovered and adopted new ones. And the new exigencies of modern verse are perhaps even more strict than the old uniform rules of metre and rhyme. Free verse (this name is very improper) introduced in poetry many possibilities and nuances that the regular alexandrine verse did not afford. Moreover, irregular verse is nothing new, since it is claimed to descend from

La Fontaine and from the verses of the Bible. Now poetry is being appreciated according to its qualities of lyrism rather than the degree of obedience to fixed material rules which it manifests.

These discussions are much too special for our subject. Let us rapidly recall to mind the names of Albert Samain, Henri de Régnier, Francis Vielé-Griffin (who is of American birth), as being the initiators of these reforms. Jean Moréas remained faithful to strict metrical tradition.

Vielé-Griffin¹ is mostly inspired by Greek antiquity, but renders it with a power of actual presence, of simple and delicate grandeur, which gives to his poems the serenity of ever-beautiful work.

Henri de Régnier² is now a member of the French Académie, and thus incarnates the reconciliation of the noblest French tradition and of the latest conquests of "modern" poetry.

Let us then travel to the southern extremity of France. At the foot of the Pyrénées, is a sunny little town, Orthez. There we find the poet Francis Jammes,³ who loves the poor, the animals, the

¹ *La Clarté de Vie* (Mercure de France), etc.

² *La Sandale Ailée*, *Les Médailles d'Argile*, *Les Jeux Rustiques et Divins*, etc., and several novels.

³ *De l'angelus de l'aube à l'angelus du soir*, *L'Eglise habillée de feuilles*, *Clairières dans le ciel*, *Le Deuil des Primevères*,

gardens, the seasons, the young girls and the other things of God. He writes about them simple poems where the blood of Virgil runs and sings,¹ Francis Jammes has to be mentioned in the first rank of the poets who had influence and were continued by disciples. Comtesse Mathieu de

Le Triomphe de la Vie, Le Roman du Lièvre (a book of most adorable prose), etc., and recently *Le Rosaire au Soleil*.

¹ Here is the Prayer to enter Paradise with the Donkeys, which I quote from Miss A. Lowell's book, *Six French Poets*:

"When the time for going to you will have come, O my God, let it be on a day when the countryside is dusty with a festival. I wish, just as I do here, to choose the road and go as I please to Paradise, where there are stars in broad daylight. I will take my stick and I will go along the high-road, and I will say to the donkeys, my friends: 'I am Francis Jammes and I am going to Paradise,' for there is no hell in the country of the good God. I will say to them: 'Come, gentle friends of the blue sky, poor, dear animals, who, with a sudden movement of the ears, drive away silver flies, blows, and bees. . . .'

"Grant that I appear before you in the midst of these animals that I love so much, because they hang their heads gently, and when they stop put their little feet together in a very sweet and pitiful way. I shall arrive followed by their millions of ears, followed by those who carry baskets on their flanks, by those who draw the acrobats' carts, or carts of feather-dusters and tinware, by those who have dented cans on their backs, she-asses full like gourds, with halting steps, and those on whom they put little pantaloons because of the blue and running sores which the obstinate flies make, sticking in circles. My God, grant that I come to you with these asses. Grant that angels conduct us in peace to tufted streams, where glossy cherries quiver, which are like the laughing flesh of young girls, and grant that, leaning over your divine waters in this place of souls, I become like the donkeys who mirror their humble and gentle poverty in the clearness of eternal love."

Noailles¹ is another poet, with more pride and also more anxiety, but she is near to Jammes, whom she deeply admires, in many aspects of her work. She is a great, noble, restless soul, with an extraordinary power of projecting magnificence around her. She has ennobled and exalted the humble plants from the gardens as well as worshipped the heroes. She has been criticized for this; but I suppose that in order to give grandeur to everything one has first to possess an unusual amount of grandeur in oneself. She always wrote in regular verse, enclosing therein the mystical and tragic conflicts which constantly arise in this generous and tormented heart.

A decidedly powerful influence on the present French literature is Paul Claudel's. His genius is so strong and so new, that a long preparation would be necessary to approach and define him. Six years ago he was all but unknown. Today he is famous. His work is mostly poems and dramas,² wherein a pure catholic orthodoxy is to be found together with the most daring audacities in the use of the resources of French prosody.

¹ *Le Cœur Innombrable, Les Eblouissements, Les Vivants et les Morts, le Visage Emerveillé*, etc.

² *Cinq Grandes Odes, L'Arbre* (dramas), *Connaissance de l'Est* (a book of prose on the spectacles of the East, written when Claudel was a consul in China), *L'Otage* (a drama), etc.—and his *Poèmes de Guerre*.

Other important figures in today's poetry are Paul Fort, author of the many "Ballades Françaises," André Suarès, who also wrote books of essays and criticism of high value, André Spire, Henri Ghéon, Paul Fargue, Jean Schlumberger, each of whom deserves a long appreciation, which cannot find place here. But a mere nomenclature of the influences acting upon us could not omit their names.

Charles Péguy¹ has a place among the poets, owing to his "Mystères," the first one being a deeply beautiful restitution of Joan of Arc's childhood and vocation.

The two masters whose action I regard as most decisive on the inspiration and work of the young are André Gide and Emile Verhaeren. Of the first I shall say nothing in this article, because I cannot resign myself to limit his definition to a few sentences, and because his tremendous influence on the artists whom I know has been so multiform, so subtle, that it would be a vain and poor attempt to try to detect it in a rapid analysis. All that I can say is that I owe everything to him.²

¹ See Part I.

² *Les Nourritures Terrestres, La Porte Etroite, Prétextes, Nouveaux Prétextes*, etc. Readers who wish to know him better have to open, first, his works, second, Jacques Rivière's

At the Rouen railway station, in November, 1916, Emile Verhaeren was killed beneath the wheels of a passing train. The greatest of Belgian poets, and one of the most noble workers in the French language was taken from us. But if there is a man who should dwell permanently among us, living more and more in his work and example, it is Emile Verhaeren.

Alive, who was his superior? Hot blood circulated in his veins, his thought was a glowing crucible, in which matters were submitted to a fiery test. His voice rapped out words that, with a gesture, he seemed to fling into space. He tramped forward, shoulders rounded, like the abutment of an arch, as one ready to push forward something heavy. His physical appearance inspired more than one artist, and the best portraits of him that remain are without doubt those drawn by his friend and compatriot, Theo Van Rysselberghe. The face seamed, wrinkled, and grief worn, but the eyes clear and bright; the moustache long and drooping; the hand hot and nervous, seeming always ready to seize an object and to remodel it. His speech was simple and cordial, and even enthusiastic, and his heart was infinitely youthful. If one speaks of the

Etudes, which contain the best survey of his genius and production.

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presence of mind of certain men, it is necessary in the case of Verhaeren to speak of the presence of heart.

His supreme title to fame will rest in his having welded at the heat of that red forge, his heart, the lyricism of great poetic inspiration and the reality of modern life. He carried with him a love of reality, and he turned aside from nothing. The *real* commenced with his own body, with the physical joy of recognizing the world through his senses.

I love my eyes, my arms,
My hands, my flesh, my frame,
And my hair thick and fair,
And with my lungs,
I wish to drink in all space,
In order to swell my strength.

This he writes in the fulness of life, and later—

I thank you, my body,
For being still firm and quick
To the touch of the swift winds,
Or of the low breezes.

And you, my straight frame,
And my strong lungs,
Breathing by the seashore,
Or on the mountain,
The keen and radiant air
Which enwraps the world.

Impelled by such elements of fervour, the poet could scarcely go astray, whatever might be the parabola described by his spirit. He possessed the true light which was never lacking, and which did not deceive.

“Instinct rivets to my brow a sufficient certainty.”

Verhaeren took up the task of the artist as the result of a supreme election. It was to this higher form of life that he devoted himself. He listened to the temptation irresistible to a high spirit.

“Mark the deep rhythms of the Universe!
Oh! to define progress in a passing image,
In a sudden language;
To note it in the rough seas,
Upon the mountain height,
In the rage of the wind,
In the clash of thunder
In the softness of a woman’s footfall,
In the light of the eyes,
In the pity of the hands,
In the manifest uprising
Of a super-human being.
In the tempest of sex,
In the hours of folly,
In all that deceives,
In all that hears,
In all that disrupts,
In all that unites
To captivate the infinite intelligence.”

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And when he translates the powerful joy of workmanship, how full are these words to the artist!

The bones, the blood, the nerves
Make alliance
With one knows not what trembling
In the air and in the wind.
One feels light and bright as space,
One rejoices to give thanks.

Facts, principles, laws—
One comprehends all.
The heart trembles with love,
And the spirit seems mad
With the intoxication of ideas!

That which Verhaeren manifests before all is a simple and yet fervent virility. Nobody can be gentler or at times rougher, more brutal or more tender in turn. He is the great wind which both ravages and caresses. He is the pure voice of nature, complex and alarming. Above all, his work weighs. His most largely winged verses are always cut from hard metal, and those most charged with divine spirit are in solid blocks, four-sided, like the masonry of a cathedral which cannot be destroyed by cannon.

The general effect of his work is ample and generous. The heart of the poet traverses and expresses the most tragic crises. Strenuous conflicts,

and stormy images torment the soul and suspend it in space. All problems of universal or of individual ethics are found agitating in the poems of Verhaeren. No one is more deeply enrooted in the life of his time, and I do not believe that a person exists who has more completely expressed the meaning of life, its labours, its despairs, its pride, and its "multiple splendour."

His works are far from unknown in America, where various translations are in circulation, thanks to Arthur Symons, Jethro Bithell, Alma Strettel, Joyce Kilmer and others.

The glory of Verhaeren was essentially international. His popularity was perhaps greatest in Russia. Thousands of readers, and especially young men, have vibrated to his thrilling strophes, to the unbridled work of his youth. ("Les Flamandes," "Les Moines," "Les Flambeaux Noirs.")

"Les Villes Tentaculaires" tell of the devouring intensity of the industrial forges and factories, and the drama of the deserted countryside.

"Les Visages de la Vie" (1899), "La Multiple Splendeur" (1902), "Les Forces Tumulteuses," (1906), "Les Rythmes Souverains" (1910) mark his most characteristic epochs, if not the apogee of his power, and in his late years this power was not diminished but softened.

He gives another expression of himself in poems of tenderness and serenity, as in "Les Heures de Soir," "Blés Mouvants," in poems dedicated to heroic memories, as in the description of his Fatherland—"Toute la Flandre." Between these appear the dramas—"Philippe II," "Le Cloître," "Les Aubes," and "Helen of Sparta," which was produced magnificently in Paris in 1912.

The basis of his ethic is admiration. Little by little in the course of his work other forces dissolve or mingle as streams which join a river. His revolts are gradually absorbed by the love which dominates, simply because with Verhaeren, in whom so many forces operated, love was the strongest.

"He who may read me in the days to come,

 May he know my transports and my joy
 Amid cries, revolts and tears,
 See me rush into combat, proud and manly,
 Free from sorrow and attracting love,
 As one conquers one's prey.

He foresaw clearly, the times and the passions to come, and presented them with all his genius, foretelling their approach in a strophe which is perhaps of all the most beautiful.

A vast hope springs from the unknown,
 Displacing the ancient balance

Of which our souls are weary
Nature makes ready to engrave
A new visage for eternity.
Everything stirs and it seems
That the horizon moves forward.

Of his life work the synthesis was complete, the harmony without reproach, and this great and generous power for years satisfied himself merely with kindness and goodness. As he had led "a life having nothing in common with death,"¹ neither present bitterness nor the ashes of a past sorrow could extinguish his pure flame.

His life was divided between the little house at St. Cloud, near Paris, and his retreat at Caillou-qui-Bique, in Belgium, where he passed the summer.

And then the inexpressible thing happened.

August, 1914, raining blood and disaster, burst on his loyal and pacific little country. The incendiary, the assassin, the violator struck it down. The unbridled brutality of an invader who already believed himself victorious was let loose upon his beloved country. Verhaeren was advancing in years, and the blow was terrible. He suffered profoundly in spirit and body, and was almost succumbing to the sorrow which filled his soul at the sight of the devastation of all that he cherished.

¹ Vildrac.

Nevertheless, the energy which burned in his being kept him erect, and the peaceable man of letters became a combatant. All that was his of fervour, of indignation, and also of simple devotion he placed at the service of his murdered yet always living country. He saw the burned cities, he saw the army pent in the last field of its natal soil. He saw the King amid his soldiers, and he wrote passionately of these sombre things.

“*La Belgique Sanglante!*”—Emile Verhaeren, after all his works of love, emitted this great cry of anger. This book is from the outset a loyal and irrefutable document. When many other pamphlets are forgotten, it will remain as a redoubtable instrument and a powerful manifestation of resistance and of faith.

In the midst of many statements of facts he does not fail to make allusion and render homage to the generosity of America. Between him and that country a pronounced comprehension existed, which had not to wait for the splendid enthusiasm and generosity of the United States towards his martyred nation. Like his compatriot Emile Vandervelde, and also Dr. Depage, Emile Verhaeren was a firm believer in democracy. At the same time he was a personal friend of King Albert, and in this friendship between king and poet, between

public man and man of science, one may ask who was the more ennobled? I think it was Belgium herself.

Presently appeared *The Red Wings of War*, that book of poems written during the sanguinary torment of Belgium. It is not equal to the Verhaeren of the years of happiness, fervour and fortune, but such pieces as "The Country to its Dead Soldiers" and "A Strip of Country" are supreme in their alliance of anger with tenderness. Nevertheless, one fact makes us inconsolable. Great patriot that he was, he will not assist in the deliverance of his people and will not see in Brussels restored the King re-enter on horse-back, amid the fervent greetings of a resuscitated nation—the King sans peur, of whom Verhaeren's last book sang.

Comes that day of glory when the soldiers of Albert I, laughing yet terrible, shall re-enter Dixmude, Bruges, Liège and also the little village of Caillou-qui-Bique,

Verhaeren is dead . . .

What will be, in the time to come, the influence of Verhaeren and his work? I believe that it will increase and be immense. This fine and yet primitive soul will exercise a powerful influence upon the spirits of the approaching epoch. The war-

riors on their return will require nourishment, healthful and sustaining, and the influence of Verhaeren is that above all, apart from his naïve lucidity. He warns us that "one must love, in order to understand with genius."

One has often compared the inspiration of Verhaeren with that of Walt Whitman, and in many respects their characters resemble each other. It is to Hugo also that he belongs, in certain excesses even, that is to say, his indulgence in flamboyant imagery, his striking contrasts and grandiloquent epithets are the natural excesses of an almost too generous soul. His faults even are an aspect of his grandeur.

In truth, I believe that the time will come when the works of Verhaeren will be regarded with the highest enthusiasm, and indeed that time is already at hand.

French literature of today shows the marks of one American influence which may well be called decisive. Walt Whitman's blood runs in the veins of the young writers of France, and was infused there through more than one channel. We first knew "Leaves of Grass," thanks to the translation by Léon Bazalgette, which was published by the *Mercure de France*, then we read it in English.

Shall I call our young poets disciples of his? Whitman would smile at this. The old master whom they never saw but can imagine, never cared for disciples in the narrow sense of that word. Maybe they know little of him, and understand him wrong—still not wrong enough to call themselves his disciples! Some writers of ours used a verse very similar to his. But his influence on a few poets is small, compared to his action on the mentality of the young in general. It is more vital than the discovery of a new resource in rhythm or in melody. It is an immensely renewed inspiration which is proposed by this American, and which is one of the treasures of our times.

He and Verhaeren, our masters, are, indeed, like some proud and gigantic stems, whence we, their branches, may borrow a stimulating sap. I remember the word of Alphonse Daudet's little son when he saw Ivan Turgenev coming into his father's house, arm in arm with Gustave Flaubert: "But all your friends are giants, then?"

These giants who dictate the rhythm of our literary life have opened to the world's poetry a new field, and what a field!—that of modern life. They sang of the cities, of industrial work, and physical effort. Their teaching is the one which will be demanded by the men returned from the war: a teach-

ing of strength, fervor and simplicity: But we did not wait for the war to read and admire them.

The universe seems to be wider since their voices praised its various parts, countries, creatures, emotions, constructions, details. . . . We are no more the men we were before we read "Song of Myself."

Let me quote, almost in full, one of the best poems of Charles Vildrac's *Livre d'Amour*.¹ Do I mistake in regarding this as affiliated to your contemporary inspiration, either still latent or coming to expression?

THE CONQUERORS

Behold the cavalier without a horse,—but whoever sees him pass will know him for a Knight.

Behold the pilgrim with neither staff nor breviary,—but whoever sees him pass will know that he is more than a crusader.

Behold the chief who does not command, but whoever listens to him will know him for a captain.

Behold the conqueror without an army,—but the only conqueror—he who knows how to talk with everybody, both men and women; and can make good tears shine in their eyes again, and can give back to them the clear laughter of children.

¹ *Nouvelle Revue Française*, publisher. Translation by Miss E. Eyre.

His best weapons are his friendly eyes, his thoughtful and surprising kindnesses,—it is the way his voice gives help to his words, it is the way his spirit dances like a torch.

He is prodigal and bare as a tree in the spring, his heart is warm as a greenhouse in winter; and one abandons oneself to whatever he says,—again it is he who, when he takes, gives.

He will come wherever you are. He will not sit down beside you as do those to whom the half of your face and but one of your shoulders suffice.

But he will sit down opposite you, his knees touching your knees, your hands within reach of his hands, and his eyes bearing upon your eyes, forcing them to uncover.

And you will say: Where have I seen him before?

As in singing under a vault one discovers the single note which makes the whole vibrate and become its warm voice.

So his words agitate in your lifted throat the beautiful voice that it imprisons, of which you had not suspicion,—your best voice, your only voice.

He will love you in your own way, with the presents you would have chosen, with his bluntness, with his laughter, his humility or his pity; he will love you as much as it is necessary to soften you and win you.

You will wonder: What does he expect from me? What will he ask of me tomorrow? And you will be troubled, never suspecting that really, without knowing it himself, he expects from you the reason for his existence; that you are necessary to him as the words one speaks, the ears that receive them, as beautiful things to the eyes that surround them.

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For conquest is his great desire; like heroes and like women, he loves to feel himself fondled by the scattered thoughts of men, which, from a great distance, lean towards him as benumbed fingers stretch towards a fire.

On certain nights, his hands, pressing together, are warm the while he gently inclines his head, for he is aware, confusedly, that his name has just been spoken in many dwellings where he has been.

Houses close to him, and houses remote from him, resembling each other in nothing but in his love as a baptism. So you will be one of his victories, followed by another and still others.

The strength of his heart will bend towards him the proud and contemptuous people, as it will enfold those that are weak.

It is not the custom among men to consecrate oneself and give, expecting nothing in return; and to balance his great love it is the love of many that he demands. . . .

Into a land of little hope, under an aged sun that long had looked serene on men both gay and sad, there came, one day, this conqueror, in fire for keen and vivid conquering. Indefatigable he makes his way, tracing his path before his steps as one would plough.

And the vagrants that he passed, loved him dumbly like dogs.

And with an awkward and simple tenderness the simple villages loved him.

And in their crowded waves, their voices thick with tears and their clamours rising in vast clouds, and their enormous and childish joy, the feverish and pallid cities loved him.

Until one day, O delicious miracle! another is born,

endowed as he, another arises, jealous of his renown, and marches like him through the country—prodigal of the best in him, and reaping, reaping victories.

And then will other conquerors unexpectedly arise, and as there have been a hundred conquerors, so now must one become a hundred times a lover, a hundred times beloved.

. . . And those that have been conquered a hundred times will also wish to conquer.

And the time will come in the country, the time of the great conquest, when people with this longing will leave the thresholds of their doors, to go the one to meet the other.

And the time will come in this country, when history will be made of nothing but choruses of songs, but dances hand in hand, but one combat and one victory!

Vildrac belongs to the group of the Unanimists, whose chief was Jules Romains. In Romains' *La Vie Unanime*,¹ we find the verses which perhaps formulate most absolutely this new creed. They looked for inspiration not so much in individual feelings or passions, as in the life and movements of collectivities. Whether this school will continue to exist as a group I do not know. But I have a great faith in the works that will come from some of its members.

The very movement and sound of Whitman are to be found in some of Valéry Larbaud's poems, preceding his "Barnabooth's Diary." And may I

¹ *Mercure de France*, publisher.

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quote this fragment of an unpublished chant "To America," which was written in 1917 by a very young poet, Mireille Havet?

"Glorious cities of America,
Tumultuous cities, and well populated,
Cities rich with the future which will cover us all,
I salute you, today, from my little corner in France,
From my corner of a city in France,
From the corner of my table.

.

"Ah, never was it graver to be young,
Graver to be impatient,
With that conquering desire, which comes from the pride
to be the last ones
. . . The last of all, when the others were living,
. . . The first, now that we are alone!
And the words shall come from us
Or eternally remain silent,
And judgment shall come from us, and action,
Or our cities will remain in ashes, and our dead non-
buried!

.

"We find ourselves at the edge of the fresh ridge;
The seed that we hold is very different.

.

"America, let our generation be the piers of a bridge
Stretching itself between the various nations.
Let our hands grasp each other,
Let us stand firm
And be worthy of this Earth, which men, until now,

Did but divide between themselves in a bloody fashion.
"I salute you, well-populated cities of America,
And my heart goes to you
Leaping with hope."

There are many names, which I would give:
René Arcos, Georges Duhamel, François Porché
and many others. But let me once more turn back
to Henri Franck, who would lead our troop today
were he still among us.¹ The first part of his *Danse
devant l'Arche* ended with this affirmation of en-
thusiasm for the Universe:

"Adolescent runner, with unwearied heart,
I shall reach the clearing where one comes upon God.
One day I shall know the thing I so strongly desire,
And my spirit will be multiplied and stretched with the
waiting;
For nothing exists in earth or heaven
That the determination of my seeking wisdom may not
know.
One day I shall find the divine current,
And with the feel of its powerful flow against my back,
A joyous bather abandoning myself to the sweep of the
stream,
On this glorious bed, between the superb banks of the
Universe laden with houses and fruits,
Supple of body, light of heart, swift of spirit,
In the turbulent water of life I shall swim with power
and pleasure."

¹ See Part I.

And in the last part, reaching a higher point of knowledge and wisdom, without losing his power of fervour, but having transformed its object:

“Truth is enthusiasm without hope,
Ardour unquenchable,
Joy that mounts straight up into the black sky,
The perfect happiness of fervour without recompense,
The high happiness of feeling keenly one’s existence,
Of being alive!”

The fragments I have chosen to quote are not the most perfect that I could have found, but the ones which seemed to me to give the sense of our next tendencies in poetry; its characteristics being the universal, the direct, and, as so, essentially able to be exchanged from country to country. And I find much of the same characteristics in the living American poets whom I happened to read. There is no reason why France should not give a cordial recognition to poets like Edgar Lee Masters, E. A. Robinson, Amy Lowell, Vachel Lindsay, Witter Bynner, Ridgely Torrence, James Oppenheim, Louis Ledoux, and others. The more genuinely American will be the more welcome, since American attitude of mind now means that broad and understanding sympathy that we are looking for in our own best leaders. I am strangely impatient to see the day when I shall try to give to a few

in Paris an idea of the movement and rhythm of "The Congo" or "General Booth" by Vachel Lindsay. Lindsay's muse essentially belongs to Springfield, Illinois, and knows no other shores, but that is precisely why we shall be glad to welcome her, with her bright cheeks and well-knit muscles, and her surprise to find herself among us. This is no mere curiosity or dilettantism. What we really love will become a part of ourselves, as Poe and Whitman did in the past.

In the literary life of France, during the past few years, there was not to be found the strict division and classification in schools and "chapelles" which the former period had known. The writers might be classified according to the reviews in which they used to have their works published, but the tendency of each review was much less definite than before, and many writers contributed to several of them. It often happens that a group which is politically conservative, proves to be over-advanced in its literary form of expression; like, for instance, the *Occident* magazine, which holds to catholic tradition and which publishes works whose form a defender of classical rules would call revolutionary.

Most of the best books published in the past fif-

teen years appeared in the *Mercure de France* editions, and the collection of the *Mercure* magazine itself can be regarded as forming the best history of recent French literature. Other periodicals which played a large part in its evolution were *La Revue Blanche*, *L'Ermitage*, *La Phalange*, *Vers et Prose* (edited by Paul Fort). Charles Péguy's *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* also contain much of our best production.

In 1909, *La Nouvelle Revue Française* was started and soon gathered most of what was living and valuable in the various tendencies of contemporary writing. Two years later it opened a publishing branch, now very successful, and in 1913 its spirit was brought into the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, founded by Jacques Copeau. The war stopped all these activities, except as to the publishing of books. But in 1917-1918 the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier will be transported to New York, and this will bring one more opportunity of understanding and penetration between the advanced literary elements of both countries.

There are many other active groups, which I could enumerate, did this book pretend to give a complete account of our intellectual life. But my purpose was only to suggest and awaken interest. The Americans who desire to know more about us

will have no difficulty in discovering that I have treated a very small part of my subject. But I can introduce them to other guides and to better ones. They are the essayists and critics who gave intelligent and passionate commentaries on that life of ours. On your way to France, read the books of André Suarès,¹ Remy de Gourmont's *Promenades Littéraires*, André Gide's *Prétextes* and *Nouveaux Prétextes*, and Jacques Rivière's *Etudes*, which are on the border where criticism meets poetry herself.

For those who are interested in the questions of poetical technique, I think that with *Nos Directions*, by H. Ghéon, the little book by Vildrac and Duhamel² would be of great profit. It shows what the young men of that group regard as important in the form, according to their present standards.

War has not proven, of course, to be creative of beautiful works of art. The four poets whom I shall name as having written the most remarkable songs during that dark period did but apply to a new subject a lyricism and a form which they al-

¹ *Sur la Vie, Essais, Portraits, Trois Hommes* (Pascal, Ibsen, Dostoievsky), etc.

² *Notes sur la Technique poétique* (Figuière, Paris).

ready possessed. About the war itself, I expect the only valuable and great works will appear much later on. The Iliad was not composed under the walls of Troy besieged.

Shortly before Emile Verhaeren's death, in the autumn of 1916, the *Mercure de France* published his book of poems: *Les Ailes Rouges de la Guerre*. Mr. Joyce Kilmer translated "Cathedral,"¹ which is among the strongest things in the volume. I quote from it:

He who walks through the meadows of Champagne
 At noon in Fall, when leaves like gold appear,
 Sees it draw near
 Like some great mountain set upon the plain,
 From radiant dawn until the close of day,
 Nearer it grows
 To him who goes
 Across the country. When tall towers lay
 Their shadowy pall
 Upon his way,
 He enters, where
 The solid stone is hollowed deep by all
 Its centuries of beauty and of prayer.

At once, they set their cannon in its way.
 There is no gable now, nor wall
 That does not suffer, night and day,
 As shot and shell in crushing torrents fall.

¹ It appeared in Mr. Kilmer's recent book, *Main Street and Other Poems* (Doran, New York). We quote it with the kind permission of the author and publisher.

The stricken tocsin quivers through the tower;
The triple nave, the aspe, the lonely choir
Are circled, hour by hour,
With thundering bands of fire
And Death is scattered broadcast among men.
And then
That which was splendid with baptismal grace;
The stately arches soaring into space,
The transepts, columns, windows grey and gold,
The organ, in whose tones the ocean rolled,
The crypts, of mighty shades the dwelling places,
The Virgin's gentle hands, the Saints' pure faces,
All, even the pardoning hands of Christ the Lord,
Were struck and broken by the wanton sword
Of sacrilegious lust.

O beauty slain, O glory in the dust!
Strong walls of faith, most basely overthrown!
The crawling flames, like adders glistening,
Ate the white fabric of this lovely thing.
Now from its soul arose a piteous moan,
The soul that always loved the just and fair.
Granite and marble loud their woe confessed,
The silver monstresses that Popes had blessed,
The chalices and lamps and crosiers rare
Were seared and twisted by a flaming breath;
The horror everywhere did range and swell,
The guardian Saints into this furnace fell,
Their bitter tears and screams were stilled in death.

Around the flames armed hosts are skirmishing,
The burning sun reflects the lurid scene;
The German army, fighting for its life,
Rallies its torn and terrified left wing;

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And, as they near this place
The imperial eagles see
Before them in their flight,
Here, in the solemn night,
The old cathedral, to the years to be
Showing, with wounded arms, their own disgrace.

Paul Claudel first published *Trois Poèmes de guerre*, and later *Autres Poèmes durant la guerre*. The former have become well known, especially the first of them: "Tant que vous voudrez, mon général," which seems to embody the fighting spirit and the desire for sacrifice of the man in the trench.

François Porché also published two small books: *L'Arrêt sur la Marne* and *Le Poème de la Tranchée*. The former relates to the breaking out of the war, the German attack, and the retreat until the critical moment when the French armies were ordered to stop the victorious invader—which they did. Here is that moment, told as a marvellous story for children to come:

"There was once a grandfather
With white hair and blue eyes
A big sly companion
Who well concealed his play,
Who, clinching hard his jaw
As would an old wild boar,
Chose his observatory
At the foot of a poplar.

"Had fifteen hundred thousand
Grandchildren in his sleeve
All good and living hammers
And he being the handle.
He gathered in his hands
All the rivers and ways
Which cross and cut each other
From the Meuse to the Oise.

.
"The front was flowing back
As an enormous tide
—France is falling to pieces!
The world stood terrified.
Suddenly he beckons:
In a sublime effort
The immense heavy line
Stops, and faces the North.

"It is dawn, Geneviève¹
Is leading the white herd
Of the mists which arise.
Joan is near the flag
Swinging her oriflam
Marked with fleur de lis.
The East is red with flames.
Joffre says: Go, my sons!"

The book of poems called *Foi en la France* was written by Henri Ghéon, during his service at the front as a physician of the artillery. Some poems are hot with action. Others, which he calls "discours lyriques," contain the following passages:

¹ Sainte Geneviève, guardian saint of Paris.

ALL FRANCE

(For the men who belong to a party)

"The whole of you, with your faults; for you are not a word, a myth, a dream; and you are no longer a God, in spite of our devotion.

"Yes, the fragility of the creature—and its force. A human being, with a body, a face, and eyes: it is thus that I wish to see you—and easily recognizable by every one.

"With a long life behind you—and there is everything in a life! But in yours, France, already so many beautiful sleeping centuries . . .

"With a long life yet before you—for you have kept your youth . . .

. . . "And of what you have been, nothing to deny! And nothing of what you will be, O generous one!

.

"Salute, face misted with tears, pure forehead marked with agonies, look of faults, look of faith, mouth of grief, mouth of joy. O human face!

"Salute, fallible heart, splendid heart, woman with the large cloak where our discords used to warm each other, and where our discords will unite.

"Salute, earth of errors, earth of glory! Prudent economist who weighs the bread and the salt, improvident hand which opens the closet to the beggar!

"Salute, gentle one! Salute, rebel! Salute, saint! Salute, warrior! Salute, enigma of destiny, phantom friend! . . .

"Now, reassembled in your sons, behold you in front of them, like a mother! And all read in your suffering what all before had not understood."

This is "On the Great Russian Retreat".

"What do I know of you, profound Russia, perpetual retreat of immense and level horizons—of wheat, of swamps and of snow; silver laughter of sounding birch-trees in the heart of white nights, stammering of the moujicks in the golden chapels?

"What do I know of you, profound Russia? Never have I approached you but in spirit—only followed my heart, dreaming of attaining to the poet in the echo of the translated words . . . but even the echo was splendid! The human metal resounded there, and one could not be mistaken.

.

"What do I know of you, profound Russia, and yet I press on in your suite as a poet in Ukraine with his little instrument—two strings upon a sounding board—as far as destiny wishes to lead you, upon the road of your calvary. . . .

"A few notes, always the same; hardly a song, but everything is said: Your distress of ancient times and which will surpass our times, your tireless plaint, nourished by itself, and to which God will surrender."

.

Can we now gaze into the future?

There is no possible comparison with other epochs. All currents are combining and crossing each other, all tendencies have a chance to find their way. Owing to the wide possibilities of international communication and translation, and to the world-influences which are resulting from it, think-

ers and artists will dedicate their work, more and more, to the remote and unknown admirers who are waiting for them all over the earth, rather than to a limited surrounding due to mere circumstances. This promises a freer expansion of sincerity, a lesser submission to local limitations. It is a powerful source of strength and stimulation to create, to feel that spontaneous, invisible communion which circulates now between young men of all countries. It is as if the world, at the issue of this war, would start from a common point and live on with common terms.

Are we to see a long period of barren incertitude, during the time of reconstruction, and will all energies be devoted to material work? What I am inclined to believe is that material enterprise itself will be transformed in its spirit, and might prove as inspiring as any other thing involving energy and passion. I see an infinite broadening of the artist's domain; the way has already been shown by those whom I called our prophets. And I see a growing and more spontaneous interpenetration of science, ethics and art, working combined in the mind of new men. I suppose that literary work will resume its normal, logical development, starting at the point where it had stopped in July, 1914. But the men having grown different, a deep revolu-

tion will be felt to have taken place within every particular work.

For these past three years, art and literature were paralyzed. But there will be some triumphant awakening. After the strain of disciplined solidarity, a tremendous reaction of free expression will break out, just as a reaction of liberalism will succeed the temporary prussianization" which the young men voluntarily support. This does not mean anarchy, on the contrary.¹ I think that after man's destructive power, man's power of creation will reach to an extent in which but few believe today.

Never was interest in music more developed in France than during the few years which preceded the war. This came after a long period of stagnation in public taste, when no other alternative existed but academic poverty or hysterico-fashionable enthusiasms for "virtuosi" who usurped the place of the work they were supposed to serve. No art had been more abandoned. None has been more ardently reviving. Minds of all sorts, turned toward interests of all kinds, now unite in their love for music. Men of science, of letters, of tradition

¹ See Péguy's last lines in Part I.

and of revolution, join in that common worship. Moreover, the great musicians of today are men of wide culture who live with the élite of their time. Thus, writing and criticism about music has been able to give us the books of Romain Rolland, of Rivière, of Suarès and this book of G. Jean-Aubry,¹ which is to be recommended to any one who wants a complete and intelligent commentary on the present musical treasure of France. Together with the new musical activity there was a new comprehension of the past, namely, of French music from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries.

For a long time, it had been believed that French composers were only capable of small, graceful, light constructions. "Are we going at last to understand," says Jean-Aubry, "the true grandeur and universal value of a period which saw Vincent d'Indy's symphonic work, Debussy's orchestral compositions, Roussel's 'Evocations,' Florent Schmitt's Psalm and Quintette, Ravel's 'Daphnis et Chloe,' Roger Ducasse's 'Suite Française,' and which has given to the theatre 'Pelléas et Mélisande,' 'Ariane et Barbe-Bleue,' and 'Pénélope'?"

There also foreign influences had brought stimulating and encouraging example. One country

¹ "La Musique française d'aujourd'hui." (Perrin, publisher, Paris.)

was, above all, showing the way: it was Russia. Spain was giving, parallel to ours, a splendid generation of young composers; one of them was Granados, killed in the torpedoing of the *Sussex*. From Germany we had had the gigantic influence of Wagner, which had known its climax some twenty years ago.

Some of our masters—G. Fauré, V. d'Indy, after great César Franck, and Saint-Saëns, are widely known already. The works of other elders, Chabrier, Chausson, Duparc, Magnard (who was killed in 1914 in defending his own house against the invaders), have not yet known all the recognition which time will accord to their names.

The greatest living figure in French music, Claude Debussy, is also most representative of French genius. He is sensuous, delicate, intelligent, refined above all, and he conceals his actual greatness and might under his qualities of grace and reserve, instead of making a tumultuous and colossal display of them. In age and sources of inspiration Debussy belongs to the "Symbolist" period and, as a fact, he chose his friends, when a young man, among that group which included Maeterlinck, Louys, Régnier, Mallarmé, Gide. But by his production he decidedly is a precursor and a master of our present tendencies. He

worked with the terminating XIXth century, but his work was addressed to the 20th century. His career is a noble example of dignity and aloofness from easy and clamorous success. But now his importance is as widely acknowledged as at first it had been denied. Not only is "Pellèas" an original and pure masterpiece, not only is the "Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune" a rarity, but Debussy's influence covers all the present epoch and is to be felt in the work of most contemporary composers.¹

Other masters are Paul Dukas, the author of "*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*" and of "*L'Apprenti Sorcier*," and his work is solid, serene, healthy. Maurice Ravel, whose clear, ironical, ingenious inspiration gives him a place which is apart. His "Sonatine," his "Pavane pour une infante défunte" and the suite of "Ma mère l'Oye" (Mother Goose) are now famous. Florent Schmitt, who composed a tragedy of "Salome," a Quintette, a Psalm, and many other works of serious, sensible and skilful character. Déodat de Séverac, who comes from Southern France and whose work is devoted to the aspects of nature, of which they give a large, al-

¹ Other principal works of Debussy are: *La Mer*, the *Nocturnes*, the pieces written on Verlaine's, Baudelaire's and Pierre Louys' poems, and his famous pieces for the piano.

most vegetally powerful interpretation. Erik Satie, a humourist and also a clever technician, who had an intuition of the new tendencies in music perhaps before Debussy himself.

According to the high standards of musical art in America, it may be expected that the works of these composers will be executed more and more in this country; French music was usually represented by the less significant light operas when Italian and German music was known through masterpieces. Which is unfair, but of course it was our own fault, since we ourselves ignored for a long time what riches were ours. Since last year, a great step has been made by the sending of some remarkable interpreters from Paris to this country, like Casadesus and his "ancient instruments," Joseph Bonnet, the organist, Pierre Monteux, who directed the orchestra in the Metropolitan Opera-house, Mrs. Gills, and others. Carlos Salzedo for the last two years has been fighting for the cause of French modern music with his excellent "Trio de Lutèce." E. Varese directed a performance of Berlioz' Requiem.

The parallel revival and development of musical interest and of interest in physical culture has logically brought us to a revival of dancing as a high form of art. We had this renewal through

three principal sources of influence. The first was Isadora Duncan. Another was the Russian Ballet, a tremendous inspiration to all young artists in the four years before the war. The third was Jaques-Dalcroze's Eurythmics, which had a deep influence on those who were practising them, and which stood, as it were, at the very converging point of music, dance and physical culture.

So many admirable treatises have been written on the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture in France and their more modern developments that they need not be dwelt on here. There has long been an interchange between France and America with respect to painting especially, and Monet, Manet, Cézanne, Gauguin, Degas, Puvis de Chavannes—to mention but a few—are as highly appreciated here as say Sargent, Whistler and Mary Cassatt are there.¹ This interchange of art and artists may well be expected to increase after the war, and parenthetically it may be said that the counsels of Whitney Warren and other American architects will be profoundly appreciated when the work of rebuilding ravaged France is taken in hand.

Our wealth of today is little compared to that of

¹ The presence and success of H. Caro-Delvaile in America is another link of that chain.

tomorrow. I wonder whether some people are not hiding their heads, as the ostrich does, when they say that life is today without spiritual inspiration, that art is dying, that art is dead. And they are kind enough to shed tears about it. Indeed they have eyes and they see not, they have ears and they hear not. Of our artistic vitality only ignorants or pan-Germanists can be in doubt.

I have tried in this part of the present book to lead a troop of friendly visitors through some new alleys of the garden of France. Alleys newly planted with trees multifarious, robust or delicate. Maybe the readers expected more or something else. Then I ask from them only one thing: let them reserve their conclusions until they find a better guide, and for their disappointment let them accuse me only.

V CONCLUSIONS

History of mutual knowledge. False ideas about each other. Principle of our exchanges. France's experience and America's methods. Common task in the organization of peace. The two nations who did most work unselfishly for the world. Psychology of our understanding. Individual comradeship as a basis for our relations. Responsibilities.

"Make great persons. The rest will follow."

—WHITMAN.

THE Franco-American alliance is not a mere temporary co-operation for one limited purpose—this war. I believe that it is involved in the very structure and existence of the two countries. If an old, long-tried understanding has ever existed between two nations, assuredly we are those two. And if the word "alliance" has a human sense, besides its diplomatic one, assuredly it is so in the case of our relations. When friendship takes the form of such identity of ideals, and results in such a common sacrifice to a common cause, we may say that our alliance, if limited to circumspect interpretation by Foreign Offices, vividly exists in the mind, not to say the heart, of every American and every

Frenchman. There is no treaty which binds us. No parchment with red seal obliges us to love each other. But when compared with certain political constructions which looked so proud and solemn, but which have gone to pieces (the Triple Alliance for instance), this vitality of our old union, unwritten though it be, is one of the greatest victories ever won by the Spirit over the Letter.

We all know when it started. Our treaty in 1778 was a peculiar and strange kind of treaty. France gave recognition and help to the young Republic, and asked for nothing in return. If you read Ambassador Jusserand's book on that first alliance of ours, you will see that the leading impulses of the French who went to America, young LaFayette to begin with, were passionate love for liberty, and an irresistible moral urge to help those who were fighting for it. In fact, the Americans were realizing in advance what we only dreamt of at that time. In the same spirit the French fought for Greek freedom in 1820 and for Italy later. The French expedition was the most important sent by France beyond the seas since the time of the Crusades. And was it not a Crusade in a new form?

For a long time, in spite of parallel experiences in republican life, France and America were too

distant from each other, and the material conditions too absolutely different for our mutual understanding to be other than abstract and sentimental. All definite ideas which we had about each other were more or less inaccurate, if not comically fantastic. "It is difficult," said Abbé Robin, quoted by Mr. Jusserand, "to imagine the idea Americans entertained about the French before the war (of Independence). They considered them as groaning under the yoke of despotism, a prey to superstition and prejudices, almost idolatrous in their religion, and as a kind of light, brittle, queer-shapen mechanism, only busy frizzling their hair and painting their faces, without faith or morals." On the other hand, for years the popular mind of France could not imagine the American otherwise than in Colonel Cody's costume, drawing revolvers from his breeches in order to shoot flies against the wall or uncork bottles of whiskey.

For many people, until 1914, the French had been personified by the fussy, nervous gentleman who wore a red ribbon in his buttonhole, talked with excessive gestures, knew nothing about foreign countries, and was afraid of a draught. Frenchmen knew little more about Americans, when we expected the modern American to be a milliardaire pork-dealer, despising literature, and presenting his

wife with gilded grand pianos, but personally enjoying the talking-machine better.

Those images are rapidly vanishing. But if present impressions of each other are more true to life, I wonder if they are quite so? Only the collective, national action of America has yet become known by us, not the silent, personal side of this recent evolution of yours. Only the apparently miraculous virtues of France have recently been revealed and talked about, and she now appears like a sort of Joan of Arc above the clouds—a mystic image which perhaps is not false, but which is incomplete, for there is a living, toiling, thinking country behind that cloud.

From now on, the young men and women of both sides have to look each other straight in the eyes. The boy of whom I tried to give a sketch in the first part of this book, and the boy who has crossed the sea to fight side by side with him, are about to give to the alliance its definite meaning. Then will Whitman's generous prophecy of 1871 come true:

"Star crucified! . . .

Star panting o'er a land of death—heroic land!

Strange, passionate, mocking, frivolous land.

. . . O Star! O ship of France, beat back and baffled
long!

Bear up, O smitten orb! O ship, continue on!

"Sure, as the ship of all, the Earth itself,
 Product of deathly fire and turbulent chaos,
 Forth from its spasms of fury and its poisons,
 Issuing at last in perfect power and beauty,
 Onward, beneath the sun, following its course,
 So thee, O ship of France!

"Finish'd the days, the clouds dispell'd,
 The travail o'er, the long-sought extrication,
 When lo! reborn, high o'er the European world,
 (In gladness, answering thence, as face afar to face,
 reflecting ours, Columbia,)
 Again thy star, O France—fair, lustrous star,
 In heavenly peace, clearer, more bright than ever,
 Shall beam immortal."

It seems to me that, starting from very remote points, and living very different lives, we arrive now at a moment when our directions rapidly converge. In the space of one generation we shall see American and French conditions of life nearer to each other than at any period of history, especially with respect to moral, cultural and political conditions.

Problems which are now before the conscience of America's young men are very much like those which made our own younger years so fraught with anxiety. There are matters in which mankind's fate is implicated and our thinkers, on both sides, are facing them. Ours is a common task in the organization of peace. Ours are the two nations

who have worked most unselfishly for the world; and this is a matter not only of pride for us, but above all of responsibility.

I had an intuition of all this when I decided to come to America, on a mission of which this book is the condensed expression. When I had lived among the Americans for a time they made me realize that my intuition was right. But the results of my observations have gone far beyond what I expected, though in the expected sense. Never shall I be able to acknowledge what encouragement and strengthening of my beliefs has been given to me by all those who have received me in this country. Their desire to know more about France was not less than my own desire to have her better known. Now it is becoming every one's task in both nations to stimulate the exchange of information, to choose among it, and thus to develop the relations which will result from it. We have to welcome any form of co-operation and exchange, moral or material, official or private. But there is one form of exchange in which I believe most: it is that of individuals. The personal meeting of elements from both countries having corresponding interests, and especially the individual comradeship that can be developed between young men and women from France and from America must be

encouraged by every means. Only those relations are active and flexible enough for the complexity of the new conditions. We admire the work accomplished by societies and collective organizations,¹ because its best result is the extension of opportunities for individuals to come in touch with each other. The best and most effective part of our knowledge we owe not to papers or public meetings, but to long and direct conversations with those few specially qualified to inform us about what we are eager to learn.

Not the least important influence in the mutual relation and formation of Young France and New America is that development of sport, which had its revival in France about twenty years ago, and was in full process of expansion just before this crisis. The last great sporting manifestation was when the Marquis de Polignac organized his "Collège d'Athlètes" in Rheims, for the practice of Lieutenant Hébert's famous "natural method." France was rapidly working toward a physical

¹ In the first rank of these organizations comes the "Fédération de l'Alliance française aux Etats-Unis et au Canada," which is known by all the friends of France. Thanks to the remarkable activity of some of its members, and first of all Mr. Delamarre, general secretary of the Federation, it has, in a few years, more than doubled the number of its groups in this country.

transformation of the race. All of us had training in some sport or another. America need not be told that sport brings a morality of its own, a sense of honour and of physical and moral cleanness, of actual and not illusory value in the development of men. The relations of men with women, and the education of women have been transformed in France since what I may call the generalization of sport. But one has to come in personal touch with the younger elements of the country to perceive this change, whose consequences I regard as of first-rate importance:

More and more we are going to see morals becoming "a branch of æsthetics."¹ This formula, which would have scared the moralists of the Victorian epoch, does not even surprise to-day, and I know that thousands of young men and women are applying it, consciously or not. Combined with an increased consciousness in his destiny, man has developed a more powerful sense of the part he can play in it.

We live in a feverish and burning period, when the world has become a furnace, and all human values are fused like melting metal. And we feel

¹ André Gide.

that now is the right time to forge and to hammer—to forge and to coin here and now the figure and form of our alliance.

So, when the crisis is past and when the world grows cold again, we shall find this union of ours fastened and riveted in such a manner that it may never be destroyed.

EASTHAMPTON, August 31, 1917.

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